



LOOK AHEAD SERIES.

BY REV. EDWARD A. RAND.

1.

MAKING THE BEST OF IT; OR, TUMBLE-
UP TOM.

2.

UP NORTH IN A WHALER; OR, WOULD HE
KEEP HIS COLORS FLYING?

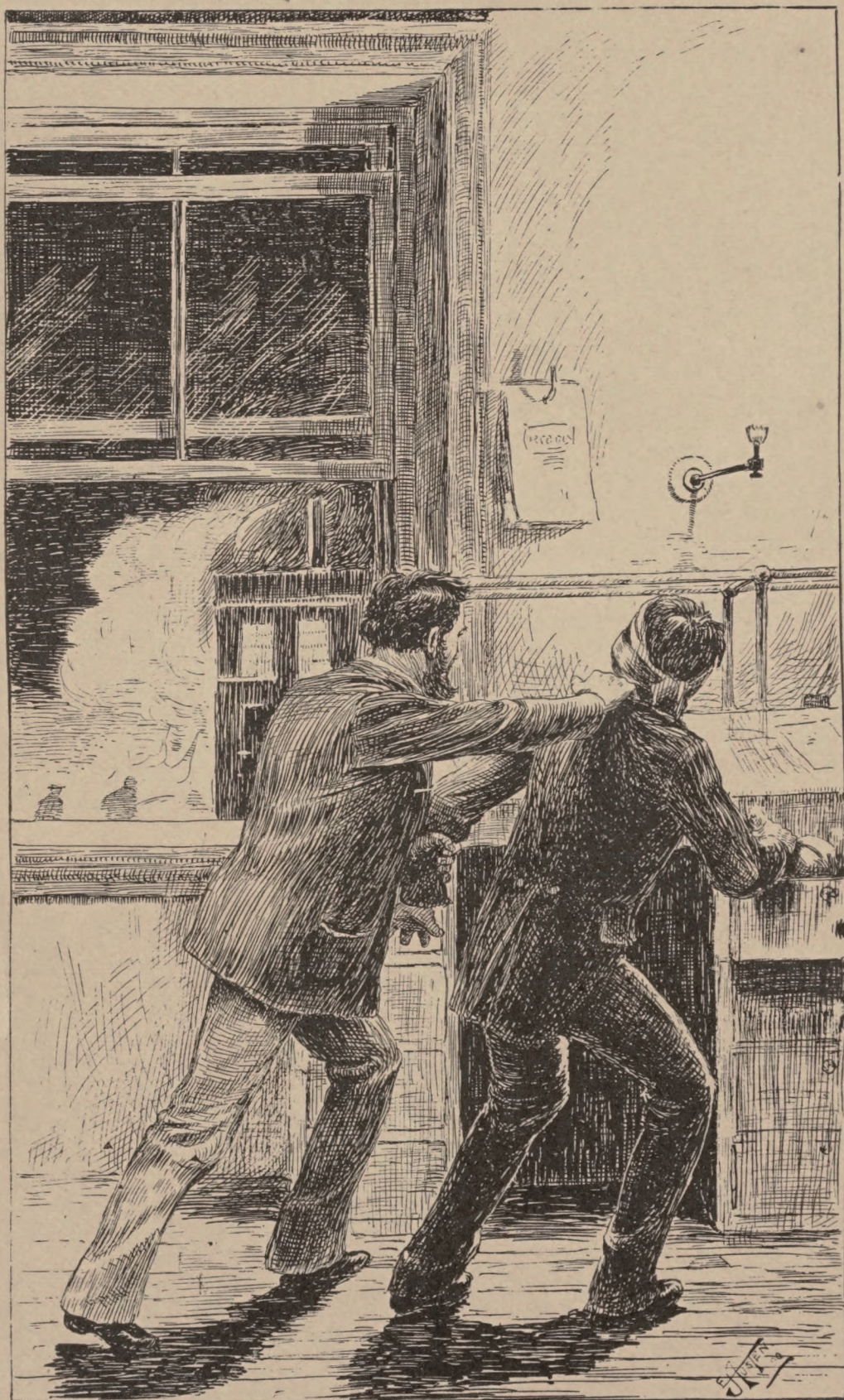
3.

TOO LATE FOR THE TIDE-MILL.

Others in Preparation.

THOMAS WHITTAKER,

2 AND 3 BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK.



"THE WATCHMAN SPRANG FOR THE ROBBER AND GRIPPED HIM."

(Page 240.)

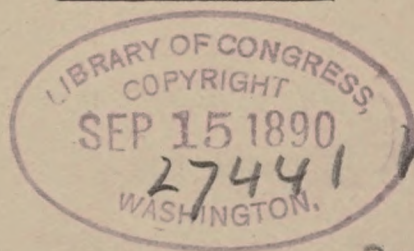
LOOK AHEAD SERIES

TOO LATE FOR THE TIDE-MILL

BY

REV. EDWARD A. RAND

AUTHOR OF "MAKING THE BEST OF IT," "UP NORTH IN A WHALER,"
"FIGHTING THE SEA," "HER CHRISTMAS AND HER EASTER,"
"SAILOR-BOY BOB," "UP-THE-LADDER CLUB SERIES,"
"SCHOOL AND CAMP SERIES," ETC.



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TOO LATE FOR THE TIDE-MILL.

CHAPTER I.

JUST A MISS.

“COME, Tim!”
“Yes, mother!”

Tim Shattuck's mother, a spry, wiry woman, went back to her work in the kitchen, saying, “I have done my duty. I warned him.”

Tim Shattuck went on with his reading. “Time enough,” he said.

In a few minutes, Mrs. Shattuck's face with its snapping gray eyes again appeared at the door of the sitting-room in which sat her son.

“Timothy!”

“What, mother?”

“Are not you going?”

“Oh, yes! of course!”

“Well, you had better be starting.”

“I will.”

Mrs. Shattuck was making pies in the

kitchen and she again returned to them. Tim's thoughts came back to the book in his hands, and at the same time he kicked a bag of corn lying at his feet.

"I'll get the corn to the mill all right," said Tim silently.

Once more his mother appeared.

"Tim!"

"What, mother?"

"Are—you—going—to—the—mill?"

"Yes, mother, I—am. There's time enough."

"'Time enough!' I shall call you 'Time Enough Tim.'"

Tim laughed in his good-natured way.

"Don't worry, mother."

"I won't if *you* will do a little worrying."

"Mother, I expect to start soon as Abram Lawrence comes with his team and that will save walking. He will go by with the mail soon."

"Well, Timothy, be out in front of the house, watching for him."

"Oh, dear! you hurry the life out of one," said Tim, rather petulantly. "When Abram comes—"

Suddenly, the sound of a furious rattling was heard in the road.

“He has come now!” screamed Mrs. Shattuck.

Yes, it was Abram. He carried the mail-bag from a railroad station five miles away to the village post-office. He generally drove at a leisurely pace, and as he was a kind of mail-bag himself, having an inquisitive mind, people said that he improved the opportunity to look the mail over. Tim was relying on Abram’s habit of a slow, steady jog, but this morning Abram was late, and his mare, Dolly, came round the corner and shot past the house as if she thought she was a cannon ball on a journey.

“Whew!” exclaimed Tim in disgust. He grabbed his bag of corn, seized his hat, and rushed out doors, bawling, “A-brum! A-brum!”

He might as well have appealed to the old brown mail-bag lying at Abram’s feet. Abram heard nothing save the rattle of his wagon wheels; saw nothing except a post-office, in the distance somewhere.

“Stop!” shouted Tim.

So provoking! Abram’s only reply was to administer to the undeserving Dolly with his whip what he called “a tingler.” Tim though kept on running and shouting. He reached

the gate of the front yard. There his foot caught in an elm root reaching across the path. It was that very morning that Mr. Shattuck had said, "I notice the old elm is putting out a foot, so to speak, and somebody will trip over it. I wish you would just take the axe to it, Tim."

"I will, father," said Tim, and didn't. There was certainly time enough to remove the obstruction, Tim thought, and now he verified his father's prophecy. His foot caught in that root, and as it would not get out of the way, Tim was obliged to go out of his, and he pitched headlong! Away went his bag of corn, the golden kernels scattering in every direction.

"If there isn't Tim, making a spread eagle of himself on the ground!" exclaimed Mrs. Shattuck who had a quick eye for the comical. "I must laugh."

Tim did not laugh. He rushed back to the house, saying, "Oh, dear! that old root must up and fly at me. Look at my pants!"

Tim held out a knee in which was a sad rent. Mrs. Shattuck smoothed down her face and said soothingly, "There, Tim, I'll take a stitch in it. And, May! May!" A girl with a pretty face came at once.

"May, you just get up Tim's corn for him—out at the gate. I mean the corn is at the gate, not Tim." The muscles of Mrs. Shattuck's face were twitching as she bent down to her work.

"But I too have been there," said Tim, "and don't want to get there that fashion again. That is a good girl, May."

When Tim came out, he found that May had picked up his corn and it was in the bag again and the bag was nicely tied.

"Thank you, May. You are a jewel. I hope I shan't have any more interruptions."

Tim shouldered his bag and started off.

"There goes Tim, husband," said Mrs. Shattuck to Tim's father who now entered the kitchen. "There he goes with his bag to mill."

"What is the matter, Sally?"

His wife told him and added, "Just like Tim, isn't it, Davis? It is always 'time enough.'"

"I *should* like to know," affirmed Mr. Shattuck, "where that boy gets his disposition to put off things. More than once I can remember when he said, 'To-morrow will do.'"

"He don't get the disposition from you, Davis."

“Nor from you, Sally. I’ll tell you. They say we can’t get rid of our old ancestors, and I have heard my mother tell about my grandfather, Bezaleel. Just such a person as Tim, good natured, easy, always putting off things. I guess it is Grandpa Bezaleel that has come back!”

“You’ve hit it, Davis.”

Yes, it must have been Grandpa Bezaleel, who, a bag of corn on his back, was now toiling up a hilly place in the road.

“Yes, Grandpa Bezaleel cut short!” said Mr. Shattuck. “Well, I can’t say I am glad to see him. That disposition will make Tim a lot of trouble. Lucky the bag is a small one. Well, guess I had better cut that root up. I’d let it stay for Tim to cut up, but mother is coming over this afternoon and she might pitch over it. Tim has been punished.”

Tim felt so at least, as he wiped his brow, and lugged that bag along.

“Can’t be helped now! No use in crying over spilt milk. David next! I wonder how much longer the tide is out and the mill runs! Wish I knew.”

David Ransom was anxious to close his mill that day as soon as possible. It was an old structure, perched by a dam that held back

the waters in the mill-pond. There were gates in the dam. These were closed by the going out of the tide. The water was carefully used and led along to waiting wheels that stirred gently at first, then splashed vigorously, urging the big mill-stones above into a lively whirr. The incoming tide would open the gates again, and the gray mill-stones would come to a halt, folding over one another like big, tired hands. David Ransom, the miller, was now looking out of a rear window of the mill.

"Mill can't run much longer," he soliloquized.

Not much longer, and even now the burr-r—burr-r of the mill had a lazy sound, as if the stones wanted to stop.

"Folks must hurry up," thought the miller, "if they want their corn ground to-day."

"Time enough," said a boy half a mile away, as if he had caught the miller's remark. "Guess I will see what kind of a butterfly that is."

A bright, yellow butterfly had ordered a rest for itself on the purple head of a thistle-stalk, and Tim dropped his bag to interview it. The butterflies are a very tempting family. The lady in yellow on one thistle-stalk suggested

what a handsome female in black and purple was on the next thistle-blossom. He must certainly interview that next one. Having seen several of the family, Tim re-shouldered his bag and trudged on. At last, he stood before the mill, a black, shabby structure.

"Why, the door is shut, and if it isn't still as a tomb!" exclaimed Tim. "And David Ransom is gone! This is queer."

Unable to solve the mystery why the mill should be silent and deserted when he had been doing his best to do his worst, Tim looked about him in perplexity.

"Oh, there is David Ransom!" he cried. "I'll catch him."

Dropping his bag on the dusty platform before the door, he hurried across a field-path that David Ransom was taking. Tim had been especially anxious to turn his corn into meal, as the corn was his, and his mother had promised to give him twenty-five cents for the meal.

"That will just pay a debt of twenty-five cents I owe May," thought Tim, and he had told May she should have it.

"When I get back, Sis," he patronizingly said to May, "I will just settle with you."

"Oh, thank you."

As it was a debt of long standing, one which Tim had said it would do to pay "to-morrow," and then "next week," and then "next month," May was pleased to hear of a settlement.

"You shall have it sure, May."

"Oh, thank you," she again said.

This boy hurrying across the field to overtake the miller, began to fear lest he might not keep his word.

"Mr. Ransom!" he shouted.

The miller turned round and faced his puffing pursuer.

"What's wanted?"

"You got through?"

"Wall, what's that low water in the pond say? That has got through, and you can imagine I've got through and—"

"Oh!"

There was an embarrassing silence.

"I've got some corn here."

"Wall, folks can't expect me to stay there and shove them wheels round when the water has gone."

"N-no, sir. I—I—would sell—"

"I don't want your corn, for I've a lot of the stuff on hand."

"You may have it for a fair price, and less, too."

"How much have you?"

Tim told him.

"Oh, not much more than a spoonful. Wall, the corn is not worth to me more'n than five cents. That would be better than to lug it home and lug it back, expecting more. Now I'll give you a piece of advice, and I won't charge you nothin' for it. There is sich a thing as bein' too late for the tide-mill. Don't forgit! Be on hand another time. You'll be behind hand all through life, if you don't remember as I said that there is sich a thing as bein' too late for the tide-mill! I don't charge nothin' for that."

Tim sorrowfully took the five cents and carried it home.

"Here, May, I'll begin to pay off my debt," said Tom.

May held out her hand for the generous supply of pennies she expected. Tim gave her five.

"That all?" she asked.

"That's all," replied Tim.

May showed the disappointment that she felt.

"Oh, it will be all right," said Tim, who now took up the role of a comforter.

May did her best to padlock her mouth and

imprison any angry expression. It would have gratified her if she could have had the money; but she did not want the money for herself alone. She had promised, on the strength of Tim's promise, to buy that day a pair of stockings that poor Mrs. Bagley had knit and was anxious to sell. To make the purchase May lacked a quarter of a dollar. Mrs. Bagley had told her son, Bob, she expected to sell a pair of stockings, and he should have the quarter to buy a fishing line.

"If I had a fishing line, mother, I could catch fish enough every day, before or after school, to give us a meal," said Bob. "We should be so much in."

"You shall have the money to-night, Bob," confidently said Mrs. Bagley.

"And *you*, mother, shall have a nice mess of fish for breakfast to-morrow morning," declared Bob.

If Bob had bought his line that night of Trimmings, the grocer, that purchase would have exhausted his stock of lines, and he would have given an order for a dozen more to old Ben Bowler, the half-invalid sailor with his harsh, shattering cough. On the strength of that order, Ben would have bought a bottle of cough medicine. I cannot track any far-

ther the course of the twenty-five cents if Tim had kept his promise and paid them to May. The track has been sufficiently followed. As a fact, I know that Ben Bowler did not get an order for more fish-lines, and so kept on coughing. Bob Bagley did not present his mother with "fish for breakfast," and on subsequent days the Bagley larder was not "in" to the extent of several meals. May Shattuck was disappointed and did not have a pair of new stockings to wear. All because Tim thought there was time enough and failed to remember that he might be too late for the old tide-mill. Would he take to heart the lesson, and would he through life be always saying time enough, and be too late for the tide-mill?

CHAPTER II.

WAS IT "GOOD NATURE?"

TIM SHATTUCK was almost sixteen, perhaps a little under the average height for that age, but a boy of stout, compact build. Any one would have said that he had "a solid look." He owned a pleasant, agreeable face while not handsome. His hair was between red and yellow, and his eyes brown. His complexion would have been fair but nature before finishing her work on Tim, had taken a handful of freckles and peppered his face with them. He was social, liked to see people and people liked to see him. He was not lazy. An active spirit was born in him and activity was not simply a preference but a necessity. He was not a boy of bad habits. He was not profane. He did not use indecent words. He was a boy that in the main did or purposed to do his duty towards his father and mother. He would though procrastinate and say, "Time enough."

"Our Tim does not do things in a hurry," said his mother, "but he is a good-natured boy."

Was it really "good nature" that animated him? I think it was an easy nature. Tim had adopted a "philosophy" as he called it, and it took this form, that worrying did no good. He would reason after this fashion, even as he held forth in an oracular way to a group of boys in the barn one day. They were occupying seats—not very easy ones—on a heap of pumpkins, when Tim addressed them.

"Now, fellers, what's the use of worrying in this world? What good does it do? Fussing won't make corn grow or get it into the barn when ripe. I don't see but that folks who don't worry, get along as well as those who do. I don't mean to be lazy. That is not what I mean, but those folks who are all the time driving and want everything done on the moment and are forever fussing lest they don't get there just on time, why, they nettle everybody else, keeping 'em stirred up all the time. Those are the ones I mean—I say, boys, take it more easy! Don't worry. Things will come out right. Don't worry. And don't let others worry you, driving

their business on to you, rolling their burdens—"

"This way! Don't worry," said Peter Stevens, and as he spoke, he gave with his foot a stubborn push to the pumpkin on which Tim sat. The pumpkin began to roll and Tim rolled over with it.

The boys all set up a shout.

"Don't worry!" cried somebody in the crowd.

"Take it easy!" shouted another.

"Well," said Tim, grinning and jumping up from the floor, "what good would it have done if I had worried about it?"

"You might not have gone over," said one of the boys.

"Ah, don't know about that when this crowd is round," said Tim. "No looking out will save you."

"Three cheers for Solomon, the philosopher!" cried a boy, and laughing and joking, they all sauntered out of the barn.

"Tim is good natured. He took that in good part," was a remark made by one of the boys.

Yes, he took the fun in a kindly way and that was commendable. To take life's duties though too "easy," not to worry about our

appointments and responsibilities, not to be prompt in our service, may prove one to have anything but a really "good" nature. To delay, to postpone, to be easy and careless in our attention to duties, may prove the possession of a very selfish nature. To take your own time for doing a thing, rather than to consult your neighbor's convenience when he runs a risk of harm and you incur none, may be a consistent application of such philosophy as Tim boasted, but it is not the Golden Rule.

I think Tim Shattuck had an easy nature, which may also be the most selfish nature in the world.

The day after Tim's return from the mill, an empty bag and a five-cent piece in his hands, his mother said to him, "Where is that meal you brought from the mill?"

"I didn't bring any."

"You didn't bring any? Why, Tim! That bothers me. I didn't say anything yesterday, for I supposed you brought it. Now I want it very much to do some cooking. What did you do with it—eat it?"

"I sold it."

"I wish you had sold it to me."

"Well, mother, the miller wasn't there and I couldn't have it ground. I found Ransom

had gone, and I overtook him. He wouldn't go back and I let him have my corn."

"That just blocks my cooking."

His mother spoke in tones that were rather sharp and stinging, but Tim was not to be disturbed by her reproofs and took everything quietly. It was a part of his "philosophy," and this fraction was a commendable one.

"Well, mother, I can take some more corn and go to-day."

He felt entirely safe in making this offer, for he knew she would not accept it.

"Oh, I wouldn't have a dog go out in this rain."

"You don't mean that I am a dog, mother?" said Tim smiling. This restored his mother's good humor, whose equilibrium had been roughly disturbed.

"No, and I don't mean to have you go out. How it does pour!"

It certainly was a pouring rain. The town of Seaton had gone to sleep at night and not a drop was falling. A northeast wind though in the dark had hurried forward all its forces, its squadrons of clouds, and massed them all above Seaton. Then at dawn, its batteries opened fire, leisurely at first, as if like Tim

they were taking it easy. By breakfast time, all such mildness of attack ceased. The assault on Seaton was conducted with remarkable vigor. Not a house-roof, tree-top, shrub, man, boy, grasshopper, or even grass blade, but that received a vigorous pelting.

"Of course, I wouldn't send Tim out in such a rain," thought Mrs. Shattuck. The philosopher grinned as he took up a book, for he had not once expected that his mother would ask him to go out in the rain. When Mr. Shattuck came home at night, he arrived in a team. He was a carpenter, though he cultivated also a very small field. His "farm" was not big enough to need the services of a horse, and he did not keep one. The gentleman who now employed him as carpenter, told him this rainy, dreary evening, not to walk home, but he added, "Shattuck, you can have my horse, and if it storms hard in the morning, you need not come but wait until noon and see how the weather looks. I suppose I ought to have my team just after dinner, say soon after one."

"All right. Thank you! I will see that the team is here at noon, in case I don't bring it in the morning."

The morning of the next day, it still rained.

"Oh, dear," exclaimed Mrs. Shattuck, "I wish I had that meal."

"Mother," said Tim, "there is a horse in the barn handy, and I know father will let me take the horse and wagon, and I can ride over to the mill with some more corn easy as not."

"Well. Get back though so that father can return the team this noon. He promised to do that."

"All right."

It was a disagreeable ride to the old black mill, for the rain was of that persistent, inquisitive kind that not only beats you but seems to beat through you.

"Can't see the mill!" thought Tim as he cleared a patch of pine trees. Beyond these trees was a stretch of marsh, and across it one looking could generally see the mill. The storm had now drawn a curtain of mist between the grove and the mill, and Tim only saw this mist. "Things look dreary," observed Tim. "The tide is high too on the marsh. Unusual to see it at that height. Who is that?" As he asked the question, he almost brought to a stop the wagon wheels splashing through the mud, for he saw an acquaintance at the window of a farm-house on the side of the road opposite the marsh.

“Billy Jones! How pale he looks at the window! Been sick, they say,” thought Tim. “If I have time, guess I will call and see how he is, on my way back.”

The wagon wheels splashed on. The old mill soon loomed up through the fog, and over the bridge spanning the outlet of the pond, clattered Tim’s team.

“Whew! how high the tide is!” thought Tim. “How it runs in under the old bridge! Dreary enough!”

Nothing could be seen of that ocean sending this whirling, furious stream under the bridge, but it had buried the flats—bare at low tide—under such a deep, wide flow of water that it seemed as if an arm of the sea had expanded into the ocean itself.

“But where is the miller?” asked Tim. “I don’t see any door open. Guess I’ll try the door.”

He jumped from his wagon, stepped to the door, seized its latch and rattled it. The door was locked. He looked up at a window overhead, and at a window at the right of the door, but he saw nothing that indicated any likelihood that he would get in. The water thumping and splashing about the building, the wind moaning and rattling, made almost

noise enough to suggest that the mill was going. Not a mill-stone, not a wheel stirred though.

"There!" thought Tim, "I came too early. The mill won't go till all the water is in the pond, till high tide is over, and then when the tide turns and the water begins to run out, it will start up the mill. Got to wait I suppose. Guess I will go back to Billy Jones'. Ransom will be along soon, I guess."

Back in the rain to Billy Jones' door, poked the horse, and Tim alighted.

"Billy, how are you?" asked Tim, entering the house and addressing a boy of his age.

"Oh, better, Tim, but weak yet," replied Billy. "Sit down; mother is not very well and is lying down."

Here somebody in a dusky corner, that Tim had not observed, gave a hard, shattering cough.

"Uncle Ben," observed Billy, and Tim nodded his head. It was that poor old salt, retired now from active duty and very much needing a cough medicine to quiet the trouble in his lungs—Ben Bowler.

"What are you doing, Billy?" asked Tim.

"Oh, trying to be useful, Tim," said Billy, handling a ball of cord. "I was helping

Uncle Ben make some fishing lines. He makes them for Trimmings, you know, and I guess an order will come most any time."

"If ye want a line as good as they make 'em, and one that will almost ketch fish without any bait, you had better buy one of them," advised the old sailor in thick, hoarse tones.

"I will remember that," said Tim, "the next time I am out."

Old Ben laughed." That's what they all sez, and Trimmings hisself. How'm ever, s'pose you can't hurry them things."

"Do you know where Ransom is?" asked Tim. "I want him to grind some corn."

"Precious little grindin' to-day," affirmed Uncle Ben Bowler, shaking his head. This shaking was not in confirmation of his opinion, for the old man shook his head all the time. He was afflicted with a nervous malady. He now continued his words, still shaking his head; "You see, Ransom has been down here and said his wife was sick and he did not want to leave her. If he must go to the mill, he would get somebody in the next house to stay with his wife. He won't go to the mill until we tell him."

"How could you tell him?" asked Tim

looking at the two invalids. "Neither one of you can go out."

"Oh, we manage it," said Billy.

"But how do you tell the tide is high in the first place?" asked Tim. "You can't see the pond from here."

"No," replied Billy, "but come to this window—there!"

Billy stationed Tim at a window looking out on a narrow little garden of shrubs and apple trees, and beyond it was a stretch of open country.

"There, Tim! A little creek comes up from the mill-pond, and working its way across the marshes ends just beyond the garden fence. Don't you see it?"

"Oh, yes! there is the water."

"Well, when the water gets up where it is now, that means—'look out'! The tide is very high down at the mill. You can see that the water is flowing up to the slats of the fence. Now Ransom ought to know that. It is a little scary."

"Well, how can you tell him?"

"Tellergraph to him," said Uncle Ben, shaking his head. "We have had it up, but I don't think he sees the first bit of it."

"Perhaps, Tim, you would like to see it,"

suggested Billy, "if you'll go to the back door."

"Yes, I should."

Tim went to the back door and saw a fragment of an old white sheet tied to a long pole leaning against the side of the house.

"That cloth on the pole your telegraph, Billy?" inquired Tim.

"Yes. You see Ransom is my uncle. He is mother's brother—I don't know as you knew that—and when we want to tell one another anything, we put up this signal here, and they have one at the other house. If the tide got very high, Ransom told us to telegraph, but there is so much mist round, I guess he can't see it from his windows."

"P'raps you—"

Old Ben said these two words and then stopped abruptly, but looked very significantly at Tim. The latter guessed his meaning.

"Perhaps I would go and tell Ransom? Oh, yes."

"You've got a team and could jest slip round there in one minute, I'll ventur' to say."

"Oh, yes!"

Tim added in his thoughts, "Time enough!"

Don't want to worry about it. The old mill will stand this tide."

Tim liked to read and saw an open book on a table near Billy. The pictures of the book caught his eye.

"What's that volume?" asked Tim.

"Oh, it is only history," said Billy.

"History of the United States!" said Tim. "Full of pictures! Why, it must be very interesting."

Tim lingered at the table, examining the book. Then he concluded to sit down and turn over its pages. Uncle Ben Bowler looked uneasy and gave significant winks at Tim, and several times he coughed to attract his attention. It was all in vain.

"He don't do no more good than that tother tellergraph signal," reflected the old sailor.

Billy also looked uneasy and made various remarks about the high tide. Tim's thoughts however, were immersed in the history.

"Volume one! Where is the second?" asked Tim.

"Down at the mill," replied Billy with alacrity. "When you go down there, you may want to see that."

Billy looked at his coughing companion as if to say, "I guess that will fetch him."

He was right. Tim's "good nature" now prompted him to say, "Guess I'll go. I am to tell your uncle that the tide is high."

"Tell him," said old Ben, turning his gloomy eyes toward Tim and shaking his head emphatically, "tell him that the quicker he can get to his mill, the better it will be for all concerned! 'Tis an orful high tide."

"Oh don't worry! I'll have him there in good season."

When Tim had left, the sailor coughed and said, "The great thing—the great pint—young man, is to git *you* off in good season. Now that you are gone, something may be done."

Tim as he left the yard, gazed at the useless display of cotton cloth at the door, and then headed his team for the miller's house.

"Can you drive me round to the mill?" asked Ransom, when he learned about the tide.

Tim did not relish the idea of a return to the mill unless necessary for his own interests.

"Could I have my corn ground?" he asked.

"Couldn't to-day. I must be home soon as possible. Oh, I can walk there," said the miller.

Tim was about to say, "Sorry, but I think I

must be off." He suddenly remembered that an interesting book was at the mill, and hadn't he better get it?

"Oh, Mr. Ransom, guess I'll go back to the mill."

"Thank you. Wish I had known before that the tide was at Bowler's fence. Saved suthin'."

"The building won't go," observed Tim.

"If it should, it would be the first time it ever played that trick on me at a tide. Oh no, it won't do that!" replied the miller.

"Well, what's the use of worrying?" asked the philosopher. "You are not going to grind any corn? If you are, I have some in my bag."

"No grindin' to-day as I said afore. I must git back to my wife soon as I can," replied this faithful spouse.

"Well, how will the tide harm you, sir?"

"Ah, it is the spilin'!"

"What's that?" wondered Tim whose "good nature" had occasioned the delay in the notifying of Ransom and he was not meditating now on the subject of consequences.

"The spilin' of my meal on hand. This pesky rain!" exclaimed the miller as he bowed

his head before the storm sweeping the marshes that the road here traversed.

"There's the mill!" said Tim in an encouraging tone of voice.

The homely building stood out against the gray mist that enveloped everything.

"I spected she'd be there, but this tide! Jest see it back in the mill-pond and beyond the bridge!"

It seemed as if it would be a very easy thing for the old mill to float away on this deep, energetic tide. The wagon was now clattering over the bridge dividing the mill-pond from the creek below, and leading up to the mill door.

Ransom briskly jumped from the wagon, landing on the steps, and then pulling a big, clumsy key from his pocket, he opened the battered door. Tim promptly followed.

"Booh!" exclaimed Tim, "what a gloomy noise!"

It was indeed a sombre sound that the storm made at every gaping crack, under the rough eaves, around the doors, while beneath the building there was the dashing of the waves against the shell-crusted old piers on which the mill rested. There was now but little space under the mill between the water

and the floor. Indeed the tide washed up against the floor in some places, and, in one corner of the old building Ransom made a prompt inspection. There he stood amid the shadows, holding up his hands and groaning, "Jest as I feared!" Tim had begun the sentence, "Do you know of a history down here?" He intended to secure it and leave. The miller's distress interrupted Tim's words.

"What is the matter?" asked the good-natured Tim, disposed to take things quietly.

"Matter!" was the sole and short reply of the miller stooping down and gripping a pile of well stuffed bags as if he would lift them all in a single armful. In a moment, he made a longer speech: "Here, take this and carry it over there and put it on top of that platform." There was no decent escape and Tim obeyed. He did not need to ask what was in the bag he was carrying to a safe place.

"Meal!" thought Tim. If his hands had lost the power to tell by feeling the contents of the bags, the powder on his coat would have declared the story.

"You see," said Ransom, loading the panting Tim with another heavy bag, "I've got a hundred bags in this pile, and the tide has

got to some on 'em and will jest spile everything it teches."

"A hundred!" thought Tim. "Oh, dear!"

He groaned away and also bore away and then piled away.

"If we work master quick, I guess we can save most of 'em," said Ransom. "A leetle spryer, please!"

Tim wiped the perspiration from his brow and wished he was as insensible to the temperature as the bags of meal he was lugging.

"Oh! oh!" groaned Ransom. "Here she comes! Faster, quicker! the water is a-gainin' on us!"

By this time, Tim was floured, or mealed rather, from head to foot, while the perspiration stood in beads on his forehead.

"There!" said Ransom at last. "I guess that job is over. Now, young man, I am ever so much obleeged to you, and I spose you would like to have me grind your corn, but I can't do that to-day. Howsomever, I am going to give you some meal for your trouble I put you to, and the corn you can have ground some other time. You jest step into the countin' room and I'll git your meal ready."

While Tim was waiting, he saw on a shelf a volume labeled history.

"Ah!" he cried, "that is what I want, I guess. Yes, that is it."

Tim was busily looking at the book when Ransom entered.

"Do you suppose, sir, I could borrow this book? It belongs to Billy Jones."

"Oh, I guess so. You might ask him."

"I will stop on my way and see him."

"Here is your meal and many thanks."

When Tim called at Billy's, he made known his desire to borrow the book.

"Oh, yes, indeed! you can take it. Must you hurry? Tell us about the tide at the mill," said Billy.

It flashed upon Tim's mind that he ought to be at home as soon as possible, but he could not seem to recall any reason for it, and he concluded, "Oh, I guess there is no hurry! Time enough!"

He stopped and entertained Billy and his uncle with an account of the tide at the mill, but all this time his mind was strongly impressed with some necessity for a speedy return.

"Stop worrying!" was Tim's advice and command to his troublesome monitor, con-

science, and he amused his auditors with a graphic account of his adventures at the mill. He finally concluded that he must go, and he left Billy and Uncle Ben at the window, watching the tide as it receded from the garden. When he reached home, he said to his mother, "There, mother, I brought you your meal, but I earned it I can assure you, and I will tell you how."

"I am glad to get your meal." She did not seem though anxious to hear Tim's account of his adventures, and she quickly said, "There, Tim, your father has been waiting to take this team home, and I know it has troubled him, for he promised to have it back at noon, and he won't get it there by that time."

"Mother, I knew it was something I ought to do and yet couldn't get hold of it."

"Why didn't you come home? Couldn't get hold of that? You had hold of the *reins*, and why didn't you turn the horse's head home?"

"Oh, dear!" reflected Tim.

"Well," resumed his mother, "the only thing now is to get your father off as soon as possible."

"Where is he?"

"Out in the barn, I suppose, but he ought

to be over at Mr. Cousins' house where he has been at work. I'll call him. He is fidgetting about it."

She went to the back door and directing her voice towards the dripping barn, tried her low notes, "Davis! Davis!"

There was no response. Then she tried her high notes, throwing in considerable emphasis;

"*Da-vis! Da-vis!*"

An anxious face appeared at the barn door and Mr. Shattuck replied, "Coming!"

He did not waste much time in reaching the house, and soon his wagon wheels turned round nimbly, carrying him to his employer's.

"You see, Tim, Mr. Cousins wanted that wagon at noon," remarked Mrs. Shattuck.

"I don't see why he was in such a hurry," said Tim. "I mean Mr. Cousins."

"He wanted to go away with the team."

"I don't believe it made so much difference, mother."

It did make a difference, even as great a difference as the moving of the family-centre from Seaton over to Barkton from which the Shattucks had come in the first place for the sake of more plentiful work.

This time it was not a case of "too late for the tide-mill," but it was a case where Tim was too late *at* the tide-mill. If he had gone promptly to the miller, and then to the mill, he would have come back in season to accommodate his father.

Was the nature animating Tim that day really "good," or was it simply easy and really selfish?

CHAPTER III.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

“**I** AM sorry, Mr. Cousins,” said Mr. Shattuck when arriving with the borrowed team at the house of his employer. “I know I am late, but really it was not my fault. It was the delay of another that held me back.”

He disliked to criminate Tim. “I suppose it has bothered you. You wanted to go away.”

“I don’t know but what it will prove to be a bothering of you.”

“How so?”

“Well, I did intend to go away, but the team not arriving, I of course stayed at home, and in the mean time, who should call but Gibbs.”

“The contractor?”

“Yes, Gibbs. He has been at me some time to build a new barn for me. I have hated to start it, though I knew well enough I

needed it. The building, you see, would make me considerable work and I didn't take to the idea of it just now. But I saw him coming into the yard this noon, and then I knew he had me. If I only had had my team, I would have been off and he wouldn't have caught me. You know how he can talk a thing into you—anything he is interested in, and he has talked me into building a new barn."

"All settled?"

"Yes, he begins in two weeks. I told him I had a job that you were doing for me, and the barn going up in two weeks, your work I couldn't well keep on with. That must be given up. I asked him if he couldn't make a place for you on the new barn. He said he would like to, but 'I declare,' said he, 'I shall have to bring my own gang of men with me—must keep 'em employed or they'll leave me—and if there is a chance for another hand, it is already promised to half a dozen at least. Sorry!' he said."

"So am I, Mr. Cousins. It seems to be a plain case then. In two weeks you won't need me."

"That is the way it stands, but I would awfully like to keep you longer. And if my team had been here and I could have got out

of the way of that feller's tongue—he does beat all in talking—the new barn wouldn't have been decided upon—”

“And I should have had my job continued.”

“Zackly.”

“Sorry the team wasn't here. Well, guess I'll be going to work. The rain has stopped and I think I can get in several hours of work.”

“That's right. Like to have you.”

Mr. Shattuck “got in ” his several hours of work and went home with his week's earnings in his pocket. That pocket though seemed very light, for the prospect of no work after two weeks did not encourage the feeling of plenty. He had dark eyes, and his face generally had a sombre, discouraged look. To-night, he seemed more disheartened than ever. His wife and May chatted away briskly at the supper table, for they had much vivacity and energy, and Tim in his easy-natured fashion would smile at their conversation and occasionally add a pleasant remark. Suddenly, Mrs. Shattuck laid down her knife and fork, fastened her snapping gray eyes on her husband, and said, “Davis, what is the matter? Something is on your mind. You needn't tell me there isn't.”

"Well, when a man is going to be out of work in two weeks, he naturally feels a little dull."

"Oh, father!" said May, "something else will turn up."

"Not in Seaton. We came here from Barkton because Mr. Cousins, I knew, could give people work—"

"And why can't he do it now?" was Mrs. Shattuck's challenge.

Mr. Shattuck related the unexpected change in Mr. Cousins' programme of work.

"All because that team didn't get there in season," said Mrs. Shattuck.

"Oh, well, don't fret!" advised Tim. "That is only Mr. Cousins' way of putting it."

"Mr. Cousins' way?" said Mrs. Shattuck. "If the team had been there, it would have been another way."

Tim prudently confined his attention to bread and butter, saying nothing.

"Seriously, folks," resumed Mr. Shattuck, "I don't know where the next job is coming from. I hate to leave Seaton. Good schools, here, you know. Better than at Barkton."

"I have learned so much since I have been here," remarked May.

"And I like the schools," said Tim. "Oh, I guess we can stay, father."

"Well, Tim, I want to stay, but I must say I don't see any prospect of it."

If any prospect opened within a few days, it soon closed up again, and toward the end of the two weeks, the family had a conference. The moving power of the household was in Mrs. Shattuck and May. Tim disliked prompt action, and Mr. Shattuck was one of those men whose inclination to look on the dark side interferes with a quick, ready decision.

"Well, you two men may do as you please, but May and I are going to Barkton," said Mrs. Shattuck. "I mean for a short stay."

"You are?" exclaimed Tim. "Now if Barkton were near and you could borrow a team and just ride over—"

"No, there has been enough borrowing of teams. The last time will do. If Barkton were near and we had a borrowed team now, such misfortune might attend it that you would never see us again. But Barkton, as we know, is a long way off. We will walk to the railroad station on the 'back road'—only two miles there—and take the cars to Barkton. We will go independent and shan't meet with a mishap."

"Cars may be thrown off the track," suggested Tim.

"If they do, I'll throw them back again," said the energetic mother.

"Really! Tell us what you are going to do?" besought Mr. Shattuck, a smile coming to his despondent face.

"Davis, you keep still. When we have got back, we will tell you."

"I'll have a brass band out when you get here," offered Tim.

"Have it in season, young man. I don't want any bands round playin' to-morrow about something that happened to-day."

"Oh, don't you worry, mother!"

Tim knew that his mother was very resolute and he guessed what might be the object of this mysterious trip to Barkton.

"Oh, mother, you wait until—well, something will turn up."

"Tim, I believe in turning up something yourself. Then you will be sure of it."

Tim laughed, and Mr. Shattuck looked pleased, for he had great confidence in his wife's practical ability.

"We shall do nothing of a family nature without a family consultation when we get back," said Mrs. Shattuck, "but father can't

go to Barkton, for he is too busy, and May and I will go and report what the prospect may be."

The mysterious journey was swiftly made, and the members of the family sat down together once more to talk over the results of the trip.

"To begin the report," said Mrs. Shattuck, "we had a good time, didn't we, May?"

"Yes, indeed, and everybody was glad to see us. We stopped one night at the Parlins' and the next at the Flitners'."

"Then I found out that we can have a house—empty next week—and the rent will be very moderate."

"Where is it?" asked Mr. Shattuck.

"It is the Squire-house, where the Squire-family lived so long."

"That!" ejaculated Tim. His tone was tipped with a sneer.

"Why not?" asked May. "We can't get our old house; that is rented. It is not so good as the Parlins' house, or the Flitners', but it will hold us nicely and our furniture will go there. I don't mean it will fill the house, but look well. Mother thinks we might let a room."

"I think, Tim," said Mr. Shattuck approv-

ingly, "it is a very good selection. Not so handsome I know, but then it looks well enough, and mother says the rent is very moderate. I am sure I think she has done very well indeed. That takes a load off my mind, to think we have got a place to creep into."

"I am sure I am pleased, Davis, if you like it," said Mrs. Shattuck, her face beaming with sincere satisfaction. "Now, May has a secret."

May blushed, and in her fair, clear complexion a blush was of a deep crimson tinge. She hung her head and said, "Well, I wanted to do something and you know the schools just now are not keeping at Barkton, and I thought it might help you, father, if I should go into the—canning factory. I inquired and can get a chance."

"Canning factory!" said Tim. "You don't mean—"

"Yes," said his mother emphatically. "The Barkton schools are not running now and there is a good set of young people there in the factory, and, Tim, there is a chance for you if you want it."

"For me! You did indeed bring home a number of surprises. Well, I'll think it over."

Don't want to be in too much haste about deciding."

"I'll warrant ye!" said his mother. "You can't be long though in making up your mind. It all happened by chance. May happened to meet the superintendent, and he wanted her to send along any young people she might know of, as work was driving. Then what did she do but offer herself! I wasn't just ready for it, but May insisted—"

"Good child!" murmured the father. "Don't want her to work hard though."

"Don't worry, father," cried May. "And I was going to say, that the superintendent said Tim could have a chance and—you, father."

"Me?" asked Mr. Shattuck, his face brightening.

"Yes, boxing up the cans and doing any carpenter-work that might be needed round the building, repairs, you know. Pay wouldn't be so good as what you had here, but the superintendent said it would be a steady job."

"I'll take it and be thankful. It will give me a chance to see May during the day."

"And—Tim, father! Guess I'll decide to go," remarked Tim. This decision was one of unusual promptness. The efforts of his family to buttress his income cheered Mr.

Shattuck's drooping spirits, and the family consultation was very satisfactory. This was followed in due time by a family-move, the Shattuck possessions going off by cars to Barkton. Seaton was left behind with its stretching marshes of green, its murmuring tides along the creek and then into the mill-pond, and that old structure that daily trembled with the grind-grind of the heavy stones. One little memento of the mill went with the Shattuck-goods, not a bag of meal, for in this family of good appetites and lean pocket-books, everything eatable quickly disappeared. This memorial was a book, the volume of history borrowed by Tim. He looked at it several times after reaching Barkton. Then it went by degrees up into the garret of the "Squire-house," first into Tim's chamber where he read it by lamp-light, and finally was transported by the industrious mother as a book "lying round" to that useful receptacle of strange and neglected possessions, the garret. Tim forgot that he had it under the roof, the natural result of postponing the return of a borrowed article. Billy Jones forgot too where it went. This piece of literary property therefore lay in the garret.

corner a long time neglected, until one day a very strange incident sent it and its finder down to the old black tide-mill with its daily grind-grind-grind.

CHAPTER IV.

MAKING SIX EQUAL TO TWELVE.

THE "Squire-house" sat back from the road perhaps two rods, and there were two elms on the edge of the sidewalk that bowed to all passers by as often as there were winds to make them. It was a double house having a room on each side of the front door. An ell contained a small kitchen and a scullery down-stairs and one chamber upstairs. The main body of the house had three chambers. Directly before the kitchen window was a Baldwin apple tree. At right angles to the ell and connected with it by a passageway, was a woodshed. The house not only fronted the road but faced the south; consequently the sunshine bathed the front windows and just before dropping behind Moose Mountain, it would warm up the western end of the house. That extra warmth was not necessary in summer, but in winter it was acceptable. Then it gave a charm to the western parlor

window to look out, the last of the afternoon, and see the glorious cloud-paintings all about the top of Moose Mountain.

"The question is how to stow our furniture," remarked Mrs. Shattuck when the family and their goods had arrived at the new home in Barkton. "It is not a big house, but then it is not a big family and we have not an immense amount of furniture. Let me see. We shall use our kitchen as a—"

"Dining-room," suggested Mr. Shattuck.

"And the room on the right of the front door will do as sitting-room and parlor."

"So it will, mother," chimed in May.

"The fact is we have not furniture for both sitting-room and parlor. When I think of it, filling our house with our furniture is like making six equal to twelve," said Mrs. Shattuck.

"Then what do we want to fill it for?" asked Tim.

"Leave the room empty on the other side of the front door and take a boarder?" replied his mother. "That is quite an idea."

The family agreed with her, though who would want to come as a boarder, no one could possibly say.

"Now let us go upstairs. Oh, stop one

minute," nimbly ordered Mrs. Shattuck. "If we should take a boarder, we have only one really good carpet for the boarder's room and for the parlor! One carpet and two rooms!"

"Oh, he hasn't come!" drawled Tim. "I say now, don't worry about that. Time enough when he gets here."

"Proper time is now, Timothy, when we are planning where to put our furniture. Here, this is what I mean. Where shall we lay that one good carpet, on which floor?"

The family looked at one another in perplexity, and Mr. Shattuck looked very despondent.

"I tell ye," said the woman with ready wits: "make two big rugs out of the one carpet. Lay one in the centre of the parlor—ours, I mean—and put the other down in the boarder's. As rugs, they would when bordered with other pieces of carpeting, almost carpet each floor. There for you!"

"Splendid!" cried Mr. Shattuck, his dark eyes lighting up with admiration for his wife's practical talent.

The young people cried, "Good!"

"Now we will go upstairs," said the mother. "A chamber for Tim—"

"Over the kitchen, please," cried the son.
 "Nice and warm there—"

"In hot weather," said May. "You are welcome to it."

"A room for May," continued Mrs. Shattuck, "and then a room for father and me, and—"

"Another room for a boarder!" suggested Tim.

"Why, yes," said the mother, laughing.
 "I don't really think we can find furniture to fix it up for ourselves! Well, we won't try to fix it up now, for we have nothing we can possibly put in the chamber but a bedstead and a rag mat before it."

"Put your plants at the windows," suggested May to her mother.

"Oh, yes! I can do that."

"It will be good as a magnet and attract boarders," said Tim.

"Let's have Tim for the boarder," said May, "and charge him a good round price."

"No objection to the charging, May—"

"But you do object, Tim, to the paying," said Mrs. Shattuck. "We will look out for you."

Finally, the furniture was distributed over the house, and if there was not enough to fill

the rooms, the very effort to make six equal to twelve deeply interested the family, called out many valuable suggestions of a practical nature, and occasioned some personal sacrifices for the general good that did not hurt the person involved.

"Wonder who 'the boarder' will be?" said May.

"Don't know, May," replied Mrs. Shattuck. "Somebody is coming."

The plants in the windows of the chamber seemed to indicate that somebody had already come. A group of bright, cheerful faces seemed to be there in the very flowers. Geraniums and fuchsias and heliotropes and petunias were only late arrivals in gayly trimmed hats that had gone to the window and there patiently waited any disposition that their superiors might make of them.

"No boarder yet, mother!" May would say.

"No, child, but somebody is coming."

"Well, who?"

"That is a puzzle."

Tim would sometimes declare that "our boarder" had come. He could hear his or her foot creaking on the stairs at night, or when the wind blew by day and a door might slam,

he would say, "There is our boarder coming in!"

"I wish he would pay me something, Tim, for his lodgings anyway," his mother would wish.

Though the occupancy of the new home by the family was not followed by the immediate appearance of a stranger as boarder, the "desired one" came at last, as we shall see.

Our readers, I know, are interested in the Shattuck family. The parents were industrious and prudent in their methods, and ever careful of their good name before the world. Tim had an uncomfortable and losing habit, that of procrastination, and yet in many ways, he was a youth of merit. Having many good points, it was a pity he had that bad one. May's character was far more satisfactory. People when living side by side, instead of imitating one another may be aroused to avoid such repetition. Nearness may provoke the development of opposite traits. May saw often the manifestation of Tim's disposition to procrastinate, and it provoked promptness within her.

"I won't be like Tim, making other folks so much trouble, see if I do," concluded May.

She cultivated promptness and punctuality,

carefulness and system, simply because she painfully saw the lack of these qualities in Tim. Was Tim's lack the most serious fault of this family circle? There was a deficiency besides this, and it characterized the entire family. Friends would notice it, and it was deeply regretted by some of them. What was the lack? There was an entire absence of the religious element in the family character and life. Sunday for the parents was a day of sloth. Neither of the two hardly ever went to church, a neighbor had said one day. Tim and May were living in an atmosphere outside of prayer and the Bible.

"Guess we do about as well as most folks," was Tim's justification.

Far better than certain families. Who though is contented to live spiritually on the low level of a neglectful neighbor? Our true place is up on the height of the greatest possible love for and obedience to God, the greatest possible help also to our fellows. Until we attempt such achievement, we are like the marksman content to plant his arrow at one side of the target. Who wants to be a failure?

CHAPTER V.

UP ON THE MOUNTAIN.

THE canning factory was an irregular building about half a mile from the home of the Shattucks. It was two stories in front and three in the rear. It had an extensive wing at one end, but none at the other. It had two picturesque porticos in the rear where nobody could see and appreciate them. The front wall was flat, as unbroken as that of the sky. At one corner of the wing was the stout, tall chimney going up from the engine room. From the centre of the main building rose a little cluster of chimney flues so modest that they seemed to be continually asking pardon for their presumption in showing themselves at all.

When all the departments were in operation, those of small fruits and big ones, corn and tomatoes as well as pears and plums, the factory was a very busy hive. Indeed, this institution was a kind of calendar in wood and

iron. The old canning factory could give you the months of the year without your looking at the almanac or consulting your feelings, whether it were January or June, April or November. Did the superintendent, Mr. Mark Prentiss, shout to the hands, "It is pickles now!" set it down as October or November. Did he say, "Now for corn!" set it down as September. Did he say, "Strawberries!" of course it was June. So the year turned over, and its divisions were blueberries or peaches, corn or pumpkins.

May found her duties agreeable, and mostly because there was the satisfaction of earning something to help fill up the measure of the family income. May's nature, that keenly felt a responsibility, made work harder for May, but it made life easier for her employers, while Tim's peculiarity of dilatoriness lightening his own load, only greatened that of other people. In the end, however, May and not Tim found the greater comfort in their method of daily work. May tried to be prompt during the day. In the morning she was sure to be up and dressed in season for breakfast. Tim was sure to be upstairs, and only several imperative shouts from his mother, "Tim! *Timothy!* Tim-o-*thee!*" brought him down-stairs.

"It may seem a little thing to him, but I do wish that boy would get up and save my throat and legs," his mother would say.

As the days went by, the canners would bring home some announcement of new hands in employ at the factory.

"Billy Jones' folks have come way up from Seaton," Tim reported.

"They have?" said Mrs. Shattuck. "Not his Uncle Ben, too?"

"Yes, all. They wanted a chance—the well ones—to earn something. Billy is working in my room."

May had an announcement to make one day.

"We have a new hand in our room, and she has come to my bench."

"What is her name?" asked Mr. Shattuck.

"Arvie Estey, and she is from the city somewhere. She is just like a person out of jail. She says she never was out in the country but once before, and she declares she is glad she has plenty of room in which to run about and use her limbs. She says she pities folks that have lost their legs or arms."

"I should think anybody would."

"She is queer, but she seems to take to me."

May's neighbor in the workroom did take

to her, while very unlike her. This Arvillah Estey was a girl with a sharp, peaked face, as if it had often been in the vice of hunger, and squeezed down accordingly. Everything about the coloring of her face was light. Her hair was a light brown, her complexion was light, and her eyes were a *very* light blue. These also had a startled look as if she feared that Hunger might take another nip at her.

May and Arvie met one morning on their way to the factory, and walked along together.

"I have to walk, May, two miles from the place where I board, but I don't care one bit for it. I am so wild in the morning—glad, you know—when I wake up and find I am not in the city. It takes much as two miles to get me tamed down to what is decent. Oh, I don't believe I could breathe if I should get in there again. May, do you like cripples?"

"Pickles?"

"Pickles! No, but cripples. Don't you pity folks that have lost a hand, or a foot, or any part of them?"

"That stays on your mind, don't it? You have said that before."

"I suppose I have, but it is so nice to have the whole of you, so that you can do what

you please and run round, you know. Oh, good! I've got my freedom!"

Arvie capered, and frisked, and ran about, and said she would like to get down and roll over on the grass, it looked so clean and soft.

"There's the mountain!" called out May, wishing to divert the mind of this animal. They had passed a clump of trees hiding "Old Moose," and its great, royal head of granite now towered up, leaning against the sky? No, the sky seemed to droop and rest upon its shoulders.

"Oh!" ejaculated Arvie. "I don't believe there was ever anything half so grand, May."

"Well, I think it is very fine, though I suppose I have become somewhat used to it."

"I wish I could climb that mountain to its very top and then sit on it."

"Lots of room for a seat."

"I wish I was there. Don't many of the blueberries we use, come from Moose Mountain?"

"Good many of them. Lots of people make a business of berry picking and they go up there and stay there."

"Oh, couldn't we go, May?"

"I dare say."

"Come! let's get up a party."

"But there is our work."

"Oh, we could get Mr. Prentiss to let us off for a day, and if he would agree to take the berries we picked, we shouldn't lose anything by it!"

"We might ask him."

"No harm in trying! It won't cost anything."

The girls consulted the superintendent and obtained his prompt consent. Tim was secured as a guide. The girls were ready to leave the Shattuck-home in the morning, Arvie having come down from her home that she might be ready for the early start proposed.

"I'm going along without Tim," observed May.

"Oh, you wait! I will go to the door at the foot of the stairs once more and see if I can't start him. Tim—Tim—Tim—Timothee!" shrieked Mrs. Shattuck.

"That will bring you, Tim, I know," she added.

"Coming!" was Tim's sleepy answer.

Tim was finally ready, and the party following the road to "Meader Lane," here digressed. Swinging their pails, chatting blithely, laughing, the party hastened down the lane toward "Old Moose." They could see the magnifi-

cent summit above the trees, and the blue sky about it was only a mantle for the proud shoulders.

"You can't swing your pail that fashion, Arvie, when we come back," shouted Tim.

"Oh, we shall come back loaded, I expect," said May.

"I am willing to work hard if I can only fill my pail and—and—get close up to that mountain and feel it and stand on it," cried Arvie enthusiastically. "Then I shall come back happy."

"We shall all come back conquerors," observed Tim, "about an hour after sunset. Tired, oh, how tired we shall be, but with pails just brim full."

With these pleasant imaginings of their probable appearance at night, they gayly entered the woods covering the base of the mountain, and their young voices echoed amid the deep, silent forests of pine. As the road climbed higher and higher, view-points were reached, and here they would turn and look back on the land sinking lower and lower, and spreading wider and wider. Arvie was in ecstasy. It was her "first mountain." She sang, laughed, ran, and was more like a bird than a human being. "So glad I am not a

cripple!" she said. "I can run, I can handle, I can—do anything!"

Up, up, they went with the ascending road. "Oh, see that log house!" cried Arvie.

Near the old mountain-way was the famous camp that Barnabas Locke and Tom Parlin had occupied in a previous volume. The berry-party stopped and looked within its rough walls.

"Did you ever see one before?" asked Tim, turning to Arvie.

"Oh, never!" she replied, her eyes eagerly taking in this wonderful building. "Splendid! I like it lots better than our houses down below."

"When folks get caught on the mountain," said Tim impressively, "in a big storm, say, or when the wind blows—or if they get lost or—"

"Splendid!" declared Arvie. "Don't I wish we might!"

"Nonsense!" said May.

"You couldn't be lost with me!" declared Tim confidently. "I know all round this mountain."

"Tell us where the big blueberry patch is, as they call it," asked May.

"Just over here at the right. We leave the

camp and go into the woods, and in about five minutes, we come to a lot of open ground, rocky and bushy. Berries are thicker than rain-drops over there. This way! Come along! This way!" cried Tim.

He plunged boldly into the thick woods, his companions gleefully following, now tramping down the thick undergrowth, then rushing across the bare, level tracts.

"Oh, see that big tree!" called out Arvie.

"Yes," added Tim, "that is an old settler. I have been up here, many a time. Look at that big knot near the ground, or not far above it."

"I can reach it," said May, laying her hands on the big knot. "And oh, standing here you can just see the camp!"

"Your last chance to see that thing," observed Tim. "Want to see it, Arvie?"

"I want to see what is ahead. Let us push on."

May however turned again and could just make out the form of the old camp.

"Last chance, Tim? You talk rather discouragingly," said May.

"Ha-ha, you old woman! Don't you worry. I'll bring you out all right. Come on!"

“It may be old-womanish,” thought May, “but I’ll keep that big tree in sight if I can.”

When they reached the big berry-tract whose bushes were spread over an extensive fraction of the mountain-slope in that neighborhood, May looked back and saw with satisfaction the summit of the big pine shooting above its neighbors and bending stiffly in the breeze.

“Oh, how thick are the berries!” exclaimed Arvie. “Isn’t this splendid!”

The berry pickers went diligently to work and soon noticed other harvesters. A voice would be heard in the clear mountain-air, and then a head would pop suddenly above the green bushes. At noon, Tim’s party went to a brook that splashed across the berry-grounds, and there beside the cool, clear waters, they took their lunch.

“Never had a dinner on a mountain before!” said Arvie, who thoroughly appreciated this new mountain-experience. “I would like to stay here all the time.”

Tim wanted to push off into a new berry-quarter after dinner, and Arvie was still more eager. May though influenced them to stay in the old neighborhood.

"I don't care," she thought, "to get out of sight of that old pine."

She would often turn from the noisy, chattering groups about her, and look off to that big, silent, lonely tree-top rising above the green forest.

The pails of the girls were filled by the last of the afternoon, but Tim had ambitiously taken a very large pail, and now said, "Girls, I won't ask you to go with me, but I want to find a new place and fill my pail—you see how large it is! You stay right here and enjoy yourselves, and I'll come here when I get through, and will take you home."

"Oh, Tim!" involuntarily exclaimed May who thoroughly understood Tim's disposition to temporize, and once away when would this berry-picker come back?

"There, Sis, don't you worry! I'll come back in season and take you home all right."

"If you'll stay here, Tim, we will fill your pail for you, won't we, Arvie?"

"Yes, indeed," said Arvie.

"Nonsense! As if I would let girls fill up my berry-pail!" said Tim. "No, you stay here. I'll holler now and then so that you will know where I am. I'll be back soon."

After Tim's disappearance, his clear, ringing

voice could be heard at intervals, the girls replying. His voice though grew fainter and fainter and finally ceased to be heard. An insect would fly past the girls, humming busily, and the solitary, penetrating call of a bird would be heard, but not Tim's voice. Other pickers left the bushes, and the sun had gone down behind the summit of the mountain, though his light still lingered in far off valleys.

"Where *is* that Tim? He said he would be back '*soon*,' and Tim's '*soon*' will sometimes reach from Barkton to—"

"Polynesia!" suggested Arvie laughing. "Oh, let him be! We are having a good time."

"But you don't want the boy to be lost—or—"

"Oh, he won't be. And if *we* were, I shouldn't care one bit. I would like to see how it seems."

"*We* won't be, for there is the top of that big pine tree, and it is good as a guide-board telling us where the camp is. I am just going to shout loud as I can. Let's both holler!"

Two girl voices loud, clear, shrill, echoed over the mountain ledges and then penetrated the great, shadowy forests, dying away with

insect-notes and bird-twitterings that were entangled among the branches of pine, fir, and hemlock, and never came out again.

"Not the least sort of an answer, Arvie! I don't like to think so, but I don't believe Tim knows himself where he is. I think we had better hold on right here, long as we can see that big pine-top, and perhaps Tim will come."

"Just as you say, May. I am happy. Don't care if we have to stay here a week!"

"What a girl!"

"No, I don't care one bit. I feel free up here. Never knew anything like it. Why we can go about all we want to. We are not like those people who want legs or arms—"

"How that does seem to be on your mind!"

"And we have plenty of berries to eat and have all the water we want and more too, and if it rains we can make a house of boughs—"

"Ugh! that would be cold."

"Well, then, we could go into that camp and be happy there as queens. Let that Tim go! Who wants a boy round?"

"Tim-m-m!" shouted May, who felt that it would be nice just at this time to have that particular boy somewhere near. There was no response to this or to other calls. The moun-

tain grew lonelier. The winds began to lift their wings and beat them against the pines. The air was cooler, even chilling. The shadows deepened, and from all the valleys and hill-tops about Moose Mountain, every ray of light seemed to fade.

"I don't know as I can make out that tree-top now," said May, "though I know where it is. I'll call once more. Tim-m-m!"

No answer.

"Come, let's go, Arvie, this way!"

"Oh isn't this splendid! May, I can't see hardly a bit. Good! are you sure you could see that tree-top? Because if you couldn't, where are we going? I don't care, just as lief get lost as not. Good, good, good!"

"Why, Arvie, I do believe you are crazy."

"No, May, I have got all my wits sure as you—you are born; but don't you know—I never had anything like this time before? It's jolly!"

"Well, we will enjoy it all we can. Come after me, I will find that tree. It is—just ahead."

But was it just ahead? The girls could not find it!

"Let me see, how do you tell it, May? I don't care if you don't find it."

"Oh, you girl! But I have found it. Here is the big trunk that we can't put our arms about possibly, and here is the big knot-hole. Now we are all right. Now I feel at home. The camp is—over there!"

May was pointing in the dark at something also in the dark.

"All right, May! Go ahead and I'll follow; or, let me go ahead, and you follow!"

"You go ahead? You would take me to the top of Moose Mountain."

"And wouldn't I like to go there and see the sun rise! Come! let us wake up early and go up and see that sun get up!"

"Now stop! The only son I am after is that bad boy who said he would be back 'soon.' 'Soon!' I might have known how he would act. I am going to call once more. Tim-m-m!"

"Here!"

"You Arvie, quit! Now follow me. On for the camp!"

The girls bravely pushed ahead.

"Oh!" shrieked Arvie. "No! I'm glad!" she added in a very different tone.

"What is the matter?"

"I hit my pail against something, and I

guess I have lost half my berries. I don't care, let them go."

"A very *profitable* day this is for us!" said May.

"Yes, *very*. It has been the richest day I ever knew."

"But the night!"

"Still better!"

Joking, laughing, the two girls moved on, occasionally striking a tree with their pails, and then screaming merrily over the loss. But where was the camp? It failed to disclose itself. Eventually, May felt that she was going down into a hollow.

"Oh-h-h, Arvie! There! I just saved myself from tumbling down somewhere. Why, it is real steep! Where are we?"

"Don't know!" said Arvie, giggling.

"Well, go back, girl! We are on the edge of a deep hole of some kind. Look out, Arvie!" The girls struggled up to higher ground, and then May halted. "Now, Arvie, I am going to try once more to find that log-camp, and if it don't turn up soon, we must stop right where we are."

"All right! How many berries have you left in your pail? Mine are three quarters gone, I guess, by the feeling."

"Berries! I haven't any pail even. I heard it rolling down into that deep hole where we almost tumbled ourselves."

"What do you suppose the hole was?"

"There is a brook, Parlin's brook—"

"Oh, I know where it comes out and cuts across the road."

"Well, that brook goes down through a ravine as they call it, and I guess we got into that, or came near getting into it."

"Come! I've got an idea! Let's follow the brook and we will get home that way! What say?"

"That brook! Oh, it goes through swampy places and over rocks and steep places and—I don't know what. No, let's bunk down—here! There, now! We don't seem to find the camp, and where we are is shut in from the wind, and it feels soft on the ground, leaves, you know, and moss—"

"So it is! Well, we will stop here. Real sheltered here, nice and shady!"

"Shady! It's deeper shade than I want. I've got my back against a tree—"

"Now let's tell stories! I know a lot, about Tom Thumb and fairies and—oh, lots! I will begin. Once upon a time, there was a young prince who was very prompt and—"

"Whose name was *not* Tim."

"No, indeed! I'll get to that."

Arvie rattled off her story, and then May told one, but the girls were tired, and soon there were breaks in their sentences. They wearily yawned, confessed that they were sleepy, and ere long there was only one storyteller that was awake, the wind, the never-wearied wind. It murmured amid the heavy drooping branches of the trees its story of the deep valleys and lofty mountain-tops it had visited, of the great forests it had rocked, of the fields across which it had had such exciting races, its voice growing softer and softer in the ears of the girls till they were entirely lost to all recognition of the outer world, and the wind told its story only for its own gratification to the never tired trees. There they were, two tired, lost girls in the depths of the mountain-forest, fast asleep.

Where was Tim, that trusted companion of female berry-pickers?

He was sincere in his purpose to return "soon" to May and Arvie, but there is nothing more absorbing than a hunt for berries when one is anxious to fill up a desired measure. He had strayed from bush to bush, wandering farther and farther, till his voice

failed to reach the girls and their cries did not find him.

"They've got tired of calling and so they have stopped," he concluded. "Well, I'll go to them 'soon'!" When he started to return, he did not anticipate any difficulty in finding them, but he did not find them. The night came on and he was perplexed. He thought of one possible way of relief.

"There is the wind! This afternoon it was blowing west, from the camp over toward the berry-grounds. Now, let me feel the current of wind! Oh I've got it! It is coming from *that* quarter, and over there must be the camp. Anyway, if I don't hit the camp, I may run into the road, and that will take me to the camp. All right! Here goes for you, old wind! All right!"

All wrong! The wind had shifted, and if he had persistently followed its guidance, he would have struck the top of Moose Mountain where he would have had more wind than he could comfortably have managed. He became discouraged, abandoned this trail of wind, turned aside and ran into Parlin's Ravine. When he began to rush down its steep side he knew at once where he had arrived, and grasping anything within reach, he held on to the

vigorously rooted bushes. Then he backed up again, retreated a short distance into the forest, and sinking down, began to whistle!

"Don't I wish I was home! Don't I wish I knew where those girls were! Well, it wont do any good to worry, though I will call once more."

"May-y-y-y!"

The ravine said "Ay-y-y!" and the top of the mountain said "Ay-y-y!" and the forest said "Ay-y-y!" and responses seemed to come in all directions. There was not a voice though he wanted to hear. He walked some distance but finally stopped. He threw himself on the ground and dropping his head lower and lower, he forgot all his troubles, all his perplexities and anxieties, in that compassionate slumber that brings restful forgetfulness to earth's weary ones.

It may have been an hour after this that May Shattuck was disturbed in her sleep. She fancied she was at Seaton, and her father was in Barkton, and he was shouting to her to come home.

"Ridiculous!" she was saying to herself. "What is father doing away off there? Does he think he can make me hear at that distance?"

With her father's voice, were mingled other tones. Barnabas Locke was famous in the neighborhood for his strong, ringing voice, and Barnabas Locke in Barkton was now shouting to May Shattuck in Seaton. These voices were so urgent that May finally opened her eyes, and through the forest she caught the flash of lights.

"Quick, Arvie, they're coming! Wake up!" said May, and then she cried out, "Here, father!"

There was stillness a moment, and next a clatter of voices, and some one—it sounded like Mr. Shattuck—said, "Call again!"

"Here, father!"

In a moment a loud, wild "Hurrah!" rang through the forest, and Mr. Shattuck, Mr. Prentiss, Barnabas Locke, Tom Parlin, and a troop of companions rushed up to May, who was trying to arouse the stupefied Arvie and prepare her for the unexpected visitors.

"Hullo, May!" "You here, Arvie!" "That's good!" "Here they are!" were some of the shouts greeting the awakened girls, while the sharp light of lanterns flashed on every side.

"Where's Tim?" asked Mr. Shattuck.

"Here!" said a sleepy voice, and they saw

Tim rubbing his eyes and advancing from his resting-place at the base of a tree not more than six feet away from the girls! A chorus of shouts now welcomed Tim.

"Well, where *have* you been, young folks?" asked Mr. Shattuck.

"*Where?*" replied Arvie. "We have been having just a splendid time. I wanted to wake up in time to see the sun rise from the top of old Moose, and I thought your lights were the sun getting up."

There was a confession—rather mortifying to Tim—that the party had lost its way, and it leaked out that Tim was responsible for the catastrophe.

"It would have been all right if that camp hadn't run away from us. Where is the thing? Couldn't find it!" declared Tim,

"Camp?" replied Barnabas Locke. "It's about twenty feet sou-west of us."

"Twenty!" ejaculated Tim. "Horrible! Let's go home!"

"Well, we will," said Mr. Shattuck, "soon as you get together your berries."

"Owing to circumstances beyond my control," replied Tim who had spilled the most of his harvest, "my berries have turned out slim."

"But May!" said her father.

"Lost my pail down in that old ravine!"
said May.

"And what I didn't spill, I have been eating," added Arvie.

Chattering, jabbering, laughing, the rescuers and the rescued went down the mountain and reaching the highway, scattered to their homes. It was a long time before Tim ceased to hear of that night when he was lost on the mountain.

CHAPTER VI.

AT LAST, A BOARDER.

“**M**OTHER,” the young people would often ask, “where is that boarder?”

“Coming, coming!” Mrs. Shattuck would say. Little did they think who it would be.

The drive of autumn work at the canning factory was not over yet. To hasten results, the superintendent had put in a piece of very energetic machinery.

“Look out for it, for it won’t look out for you,” was the superintendent’s warning to his hands.

“Of course!” cried Arvie. “We have some sense, haven’t we, May?”

“Yes, indeed,” replied her workmate. It was a bright autumn day when Arvie said the above, and a strong wind like a broom had been sweeping down the slopes of Moose Mountain, and before it went all the filmy flecks of vapor above field and meadow, leav-

ing a clear, shining atmosphere, up through which towered Moose Mountain in all its grandeur, and the outlines of its summit rose up sharp against the sky as if chiseled by titan sculptors.

Near the bench where May and Arvie worked, was a window from which a view of Moose Mountain could be had.

“ Oh, didn’t we have a good time up on the mountain that day, running about and getting lost ? ”

Arvie rattled away, not waiting for an answer from her companion. She finally said, “ It is so good to be whole, I think, so you can go about and can do what you want. Nice to have hands and feet ! What would I do if I didn’t have them ! ”

“ Seems to me that subject gives you a good deal of trouble,” said May, looking thoughtfully out of the window. “ Well, if I were that way, I suppose I should get used to it somehow. Folks do, you know, get used to things, Arvie.”

“ So they do, May. When you come to think of it, it is just so in this life. We do get used to things. It is so at home. There are all my brothers and sisters, and my father has real small wages. How we ever got along, I

don't know, but we did. I suppose it is so always. Yes, we get used to things. People get used to being poor. Same way with blind folks and everybody else too."

She looked a moment longer out of the window and then said, "Well, this won't do for me. I believe Mr. Prentiss has something for me to do upstairs."

She had not been gone five minutes when May heard a strange clamor. It came from a room directly above her, and as the doors between were all open, May could distinctly hear it. The noise was that of a single shriek from a girl's voice, "Help!" Then there was the agonized shouting of a man; "Stop that machinery, won't you? Quick!" Then the sound of feet hurrying over the floor was heard, interrupted by other shrieks and other shouts. The clatter of the machinery came to a halt. People left their work and ran upstairs. May hurried with them. She turned her head quickly when she reached the next story and saw a confused crowd around the new machinery. Then she witnessed a scattering of the people, as out of the centre of the group, somebody or something was borne.

"What's—what's the matter?" asked the superintendent, rushing up.

May caught words about "accident," "new machinery," "girl hurt," but May did not need to ask the name of the unfortunate. Borne in the arms of several men, her pale, white face drooping, the eyes closed, convulsive twitches passing over her features—was Arvie! They stopped a minute, and some one said, "There! I have tied my handkerchief above the wound. That will stop the blood."

"Oh—Oh—is she hurt bad?" cried May, the tears filling her eyes.

"Stand away, sis!" said a workman.

"Take her down to the office, and, Jones, get the doctor," said the superintendent. "Quick!"

"Jones" was an overseer, and he quickly secured a physician who visited Arvie in the office and doing all that was possible there, directed her to be taken home. The superintendent's carriage was waiting at the door. Mr. Shattuck was there also.

"Shattuck," said the superintendent, "I know your wife is a careful nurse and the people where Arvie boards—her only home here—are not the best hands for any sickness. They say you want a boarder, and if you will let me send the girl there, I will see that the bill is paid until she is able to be out again."

"Well," said Mr. Shattuck deliberately, "I guess it will be all right. I suppose the carriage will come slowly, and I will run ahead and let my wife know, and we will be ready for the girl."

In a very little time the long expected "boarder," shivering, convulsed with pain, with closed eyes and compressed lips, arrived at the door of the Shattucks.

"Poor girl! Come right in!" said Mrs. Shattuck in motherly tones that went to Arvie's heart. "Poor girl! We will do all we can for you."

Arvie was carried upstairs into the long waiting "spare room" on the second floor, and laid upon the bed. The doctor followed.

"Oh—oh, father!" said May, detaining Mr. Shattuck whom she met at the door after hurrying home. "What is it? Some folks say it is one thing and some another. What is it?"

"May, Arvie has lost an arm; caught in the machinery."

"Oh, dear! And she didn't want to lose that! Left or right, father?"

"Left. I am sorry for her. We will do all we can."

May went away soberly. "I wish I could pray, and I'd pray for Arvie," thought May.

The doctor said Arvie must be kept very quiet that night, and no one had better see her save Mrs. Shattuck. The next day, Arvie inquired for May, and her mother admitted her as soon as she had returned from the canning factory. It was a clear but chilly autumn evening. The sun going down behind Moose Mountain had flamed with unusual brilliancy as if, aware that the night would be a cold one, it were laying a few extra sticks on its ruddy fires in the west. A cricket in the dying grass by the front door-step was trying to give a cheerful chirp. Did he imagine that Jack Frost might silence him that night and he wished all the world to know that his music to the last was brave and hopeful? In the east, one white star was putting its head shrinkingly out into the chilly air as if getting up courage for an all-night illumination. May gave another glance at the last fires of the sunset and then at the pale little star in the east, and said, "Good-night, little cricket, and good-by till spring if I don't see you again!"

"May," said her mother from the head of the stairs, "Arvie has been calling for you, and you may come up if you want to, when your hat and sack are off."

"Oh, may I? I will right away."

Although the furnishing of the front chamber was rather scanty—as it is always hard to make six equal to twelve—still the room had a comfortable, homelike look. Mrs. Shattuck had brought in a yellow stand, a few chairs including a softly-cushioned rocker, and two red and black rag-mats. The special ornament and comforter though was the fireplace. Mrs. Shattuck had planted there a pair of old-fashioned andirons that she found up garget, and Tim, who had been very helpful in the present emergency, showing remarkable promptness, had brought up huge armfuls of wood from the shed. A glowing fire was the result of all the finding and lugging, and a radiance from this centre had gone all about the room like the smile that spreads over the face of a cheerful old grandmother.

“May!” whispered somebody whose pale face and light hair pressed the clean, white pillow.

“Poor Arvie!” exclaimed May, looking compassionately at the white face. “I’m real sorry for you. Does it pain you?”

May shrank from saying arm. During Arvie’s sickness, the member in trouble was designated as “it.”

“It does hurt, May.”

"Now, girls," exclaimed Mrs. Shattuck, who had been bustling about the room, stimulating the fire, smoothing the rag-mats, and dropping the curtains at the windows, "I am going down to get supper, and I will leave you alone. Don't talk much to Arvie, May. Just sit by her bed and keep pretty quiet." Mrs. Shattuck whispered, "You can sort of baby her and humor her."

"I will, mother."

Arvie was the talkative member of this little party of two.

"May!" she said in low tones.

"What?"

"I don't want to be saying too much, but—"

There was an awkward silence. The fire talked, and the autumn wind without talked, but the girls were now still. May turned to Arvie—and were there hot tears glistening in the sick girl's eyes?

"Oh, I wouldn't, Arvie."

"I won't, May, but—but, don't it seem queer?"

"Yes, Arvie, too bad!"

"What do you suppose it was for?"

"I don't know, I am sure."

"Why couldn't I have done my work and

gone home like the other girls, and it not happened?"

"I don't know. Too bad!"

There was another season of silence. Only the fire and the wind talked.

"May!"

"What, Arvie?"

"Can't you say a prayer?"

Between the bed and the fire in the chimney, Arvie saw a head shaking. That meant "no."

More moments of silence. A dread came over May, and she now wished she was out of the room. Perhaps her mother would bring up Arvie's supper and that would relieve May who felt that her position had become very embarrassing. It seemed as if the heat of the fireplace had all gone into May's face. She did hope that Arvie would not renew her request. It soon came, though.

"I am not afraid, but—" Arvie paused. "May!" she called.

"What is it, Arvie?"

"Haven't you a Bible? There is one on the stand."

Arvie had seen Mrs. Shattuck bring in the volume and lay it on the stand. Something was needed for the top of this piece of furni-



"HOLDING THE BOOK NEAR THE CANDLE, TURNING HER FACE AWAY FROM
ARVIE."

(Page 85.)

ture, and what was there better than this book though Mrs. Shattuck had not looked inside one for many months? There are hosts of people who, like Mrs. Shattuck do not take the Bible to ornament their lives, but somehow feel that it is good to ornament a table, especially if the book have pictures and showy covers. May felt that she must obey, or opposition might make the patient worse. Had she not promised the nurse that she would "humor" the patient? Conscious that she was in an awkward place, May arose and bringing the Bible, stood beside the bed. Arvie could see the outlines of May's head, but she did not notice the embarrassment in May's face.

"I guess there is a candle on the mantle-piece, May. I wish you would light it."

May lighted the candle.

"In the first part of the New Testament—somewhere—is the Lord's Prayer. Couldn't you read it?"

May knew the Lord's Prayer, but she could not have used it as a petition. She could read it, and holding the book near the candle, turning her face away from Arvie, she read, "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name—"

Arvie had put her only hand up to her face and covered it.

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven—”

May thought she caught a sigh, but whether it was the wind or Arvie, she could not say. There was no sound from the bed during the next clause.

“Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

The one pitiful hand upon Arvie's face convulsively moved in that petition for forgiveness.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

“Amen!” said a weak voice from the bed.

“May, you wouldn't care if I should be alone just two or three minutes,” soon asked Arvie.

“Oh no, dear! All right, and I'll hurry up mother.”

“Oh you needn't! I just wanted to think. You won't care.”

“Oh, no! Don't speak of it!”

The attendant in that sick room not only

was ready to "humor" the patient, but she felt that she would be very glad to slip out of a very contracted corner.

"Queer girl!" thought May, as she stepped softly down the entry stairs. "Wild as a gypsy on the mountain, and now she wants me to pray with her! Queer girl!"

The strange girl was all alone there in the still upper room. Daylight had gone from the windows, and in its place were the faint, silvery rays of the candle helped out by the flashes of the fire on the hearth.

So strange to be in that sick-room, to have been there at all that day rather than at the canning factory, and for what? The bitter tears were oozing from her eyes. Arvie's impulse was to cover her face with her hands, but did she have hands? Then the thought of that poor, lost arm came to her, afflicting her, and she raised to her face her only hand, and through her fingers trickled the hot tears. Oh, she did need some one to help her! If her mother were only living! In her place, was an unsympathetic step-mother away off. There was Arvie's father, but he was too poor to take the journey to Barkton. At her late boarding-house, who cared for her? Wasn't there a strong friend somewhere? "Our

Father," was the echo that seemed to survive the prayer May had read, and was not he a Friend?

"If a Father and a great one, why does he let poor folks suffer, and especially poor girls in canning factories?" thought Arvie. "Wasn't it better for me that I should keep my arm rather than to lose it?" Her soul was a boat on a stormy sea and swept by billows too violent for it.

"Father, Father!" she whispered.

Was it all for the best—that she should lose her arm and lie there on the bed, in so much pain? She could not seem to make any headway in her thinking. She would start out but would get no farther than that horrid machinery in the canning factory, rumbling and grinding away, horrid as some devouring monster. She could not seem to see any good reason for her trouble. Was it not strange that she who hated to be a cripple in any way, should now lose a limb and be hindered from her old activity? Why was it? If God were a Father, would he not tell her? Then she remembered that parents did not always tell children why things were done, and that when the parent might be silent wisely, to the child it might seem very unwise, hard and cruel.

Farther along, the child could look back and see that the parent was right.

"I wonder if it will be so with me!" reflected Arvie.

Then she asked herself this question; what is done by the children when parents don't tell them the reason why this or that course of conduct may have been taken? If they are dutiful children, they try to be patient and submissive, and wait to know some other day the reason for any day's discipline. Could Arvie now wait?

"I want to," she murmured. "I wish I could have some one to help me."

As she lay in her bed, she thought the curtain of the window brightened.

"How can that be? The fire is dying down," she said, raising herself a little on her elbow and looking at the fireplace. The glow upon the curtain increased while the glow in the fireplace lessened. The candle too was dying.

"Ah, I see!" she said. "I can look under the edge of the curtain and see the moon coming up. What a big one!"

Then a tree before the window began to throw soft, light shadows upon the curtain. One limb cast a shadow up and down the curtain.

“Oh, there is another limb throwing a shadow across the first, and they make the cross!” exclaimed Arvie. “That is queer!”

A shadow in the form of a cross attracted Arvie’s thoughts, and then it sent them away from this chamber. She recalled her Sunday-school in the city. She thought of the Saviour taught in the school. Christmas and Easter came to her. All their beautiful lessons were suggested to her. As the perfume of a single flower will remind us of the scented garden where we have seen its kind growing, that shadow of the cross suggested to Arvie the Saviour who hung upon it, dying at Calvary in His great, tender love for mankind. Did He not help all people, Arvie thought, especially poor people, sick people, those who could not help themselves? She tried to think how He must have looked when He was on the earth, going to beds of pain and into homes of poverty.

She said, “I wonder how He looked when he was going about! I wonder if He goes about now! Of course He does; He must. He is the Saviour always. I—I—”

She hesitated. The thought in her heart was this: if He really were near, going by her bed, would she not hold out her hand that

He might grasp it and lead her and guide her?

"If I had two hands, I'd give Him both," she murmured. "I don't believe He will push one away. Perhaps, He will be all the more interested, if He sees only one. He will say, 'There is no other hand and I pity—'"

She could think no further. Sorrow was rocking her soul as the sea tosses a boat. Then came a stillness. She only said, "I—I—do think He is near."

The fire on the hearth was sinking lower and the cross on the curtain was more distinct.

"I would like to rest now," she murmured.

Mrs Shattuck was detained down-stairs longer than she expected. Somebody wished to see her, and then Arvie's supper must be prepared. When she did enter Arvie's chamber, gently pushing the door open, she saw that the fire was only a bed of red coals, and the candle had sputtered for the last time, and gone out. She set down the supper tray, lighted another candle, and then went to the bedside.

"Arvie!" she said softly.

She held up the candle above the bed and looked down.

“Why, she is asleep!” said Mrs. Shattuck.
“Guess I won’t wake her. I’ll go down-stairs for a minute.”

When she entered the kitchen, she said to May, “Arvie is sleeping. That is good.”

“Mother,” replied May, “I believe Arvie is getting religious.”

She spoke in a suppressed tone of voice. “Religion” was a mysterious subject in the Shattuck home.

CHAPTER VII.

A FIGHT WITH ONE HAND.

“**I** AM sure, Tim, I am perplexed.”

“I dare say you are, mother, but I shouldn't fret myself into a fever about it.”

“I don't intend to, but something must be done.”

“Oh, well, mother, take it easy, take it easy.”

“Tim, that is your way of talking, but I am glad to say it is not my way of doing. Arvie herself spoke to me about it. You see she is doing nicely, has begun to go out, and now the question with her is what to do in life. She don't want to go home to her poor folks, and yet what can she do?”

“Oh, well, don't worry.”

Here, Tim, as he sat before the fire, so acceptable this night when the ground was white with snow, indulged in a lazy yawn.

“There, Tim,” replied his mother, her eyes snapping, “that style of talking just stirs me

up. Here is a girl with one hand, and life is before her, and she must make her fight with one hand. You say, 'don't worry, take it easy'; but people freeze to death who act that way out in the cold. Now, something must be done, *done, done!* I am going down to see Mr. Prentiss, the superintendent, to-morrow morning, the first thing, and see what can be done."

The next morning, true to her word, she started for the canning factory. On her way, she put her head inside of the door of the Jones-home.

"I only stopped," she said, "to say how-d'y-do and inquire how you all are."

"About as usual," replied the old sailor, Ben Bowler, ending his report with a cough as if to say, "You see though I'm no better."

"I'll just step inside so as not to keep that door open. Where is Susan?"

"She's out. Here is Billy."

Susan was Mrs. Jones, Billy's mother. Her son, who stood before a looking-glass combing his hair, answered for himself.

"Hav'n't you overslept, Billy? Our folks have been gone to work for more than an hour."

"I change my work to-day, and don't begin

till this noon. I have been doing most anything, errands, and so on ; now I have got a job on winter-pears. Going to can those."

"I wish I could think of something for Arvie."

"She can have my place as far as I am concerned."

Mrs. Shattuck said good morning and left for the office of the superintendent. Mr. Prentiss was at his desk.

"Oh, Mrs. Shattuck, you called I suppose, with your bill for Arvie's board? The company will pay that, and I will settle to-day, just as well as not."

"That was not on my mind. I wanted to know if you did not have some kind of work for Arvie."

"That is what I have asked myself," said Mr. Prentiss, leaning back in his chair. He was a man of much energy, but it was not an energy that makes itself disagreeable, pressing down upon those employed while he pressed them forward. He was always interested in their welfare, always ready to listen to their requests and grant them if he could.

"Mrs. Shattuck, if I only knew what to give Arvie, I would gladly do it. What is there that poor, one-handed girl can do?"

"Something, I know. A fight with one hand is a hard matter, but that is sometimes done. What is it young Jones has been doing? I believe he has got through with that job."

"Oh, he has been a kind of errand boy, to go to the post-office, to take an order from the office to the men, to go over to the railroad station, to buy anything at the stores."

"Well, couldn't Arvie do that?"

"Would she, Mrs. Shattuck?"

"I think it would be a good idea to ask her."

"You—you ask her and then tell me."

Mrs. Shattuck asked Arvie and then Arvie surprised her with her answer.

"Mrs. Shattuck, now I more than ever believe God hears prayer."

"You—you—what?"

Prayer was a perplexing phenomenon to Mrs. Shattuck, and she stared at Arvie who had so abruptly diverted her thoughts.

"Why, I asked God to give me something I could do with one hand. I thanked him for my feet. Oh, how rich I am in my power to go about! And I asked God to give me something to do where I could go about. Now there comes this chance. You tell Mr.

Prentiss—no, I'll tell him myself! I'll begin to-morrow if he wants me. Why, I shall make a good errand-girl, I know I shall. Oh, you are so good! You dear, dear woman, I must kiss you."

"The strangest girl I ever saw," thought Mrs. Shattuck as she tripped down-stairs. "She appreciates all you do, and I like that in her. Seems like a daughter. To think though that prayer had anything to do with it, with my going to the office and getting that place for Arvie! Strangest girl I ever did see!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD SAILOR'S STORY.

THAT old sailor, Uncle Ben Bowler, sat as close to the kitchen stove as one comfortably could without scorching. Such proximity was not strange. It was a cold night in December. It was a night full of snow. The great blasts that came down from Moose Mountain were laden with snow, and over and about the Jones-cottage, they shook themselves till the little building was handsomely powdered as the wig of an old-time gentleman going to a dinner-party. Uncle Ben Bowler very much wished that a troop of young people would come in to ask for one of his stories. With or without the asking, they were very sure of a story from the old sailor. His active duties in this life seemed to be limited to three things, making fishing lines, bringing in wood for the fire, and telling stories. There was little space in Barkton for the first occupation. At the present time,

there was no call for the second, a big wood-box having been already filled. If some one then would only come and ask for a story! The old sailor turned his big, bleached blue eyes toward the door, and longed to hear a footstep. Uncle Ben Bowler was famous for his sea stories. They interested the teller fully as much as the listener, for it gave Uncle Ben an opportunity to live his life over, to hear the sea-winds blow, to catch the lift and feel the roll of the waves, to tingle again with the excitement of an adventure that at this distance from the sea gave only pleasure and involved no danger. It is true, he allowed his imagination rather large liberty, but there was no intentional deceit. His hearers who had heard repeated versions of a story sometimes thought that his stories grew like a tree from year to year. His great, faded eyes now beseechingly wandered to the door, and he gave a gratified, "Hem—m—m!" when Billy Jones entered, and behind him was Tim Shattuck. The two lads had visited the post-office in search of any mail that might be there.

"Tim, how d'ye do?" said Mrs. Jones. "Sakes, boys! how it snows! Stand right there and let me brush the snow off from you."

"This makes you think of tough nights at sea, don't it, Mr. Bowler?" asked Tim.

"I have seen some awful nights," remarked the old sailor, "and some awful days if I do say it. I could tell you of strange things."

"O Uncle Ben, this is just the night for a story. Do tell us one!" pleaded Tim.

"Wall! Take your things off and make yourselves comfortable, boys, and praps I may think of suthin."

At her table covered with a faded green cloth, sat Mrs. Jones busy with her sewing. Uncle Ben Bowler was in his chair on one side of the stove, and on the other, were Tim and Billy.

"Shall I tell you, boys, about the reskoo of the drownin' when the sailboat was upset?"

"Oh, yes, tell us that!" cried Tim Shat-tuck.

While the wind roared down the chimney, and the flames rushed upward as if to drive it back, the ancient salt told his story.

"'Twas one summer, as fine and likely a family as you ever see came to Seaton to stay a day or two—don't I wish I could give the name? There was a father, a mother, a young chap about sixteen and a little youngster not more than six. They were master-hands at

sailin', or thought they were, and went out twice a day, yes, twice a day in my leetle yaller boat. It was a rowboat you know, but fitted up so that you could sail with her if you wanted to. A smart, handy thing, too, if I do say it. Wall, we'll call the youngster—Jimmy—for I never knew their names—and the older one—er—Fred. The father and mother went off with Fred—he was a nice lookin' big boy—but this Jimmy, as I call him, it seems they left at home. I told 'em they had better put off their cruise, that the wind was skittish and the sky looked squally, but then people that only see salt water once a year are apt to think they know more than those who live alongside it all the time. After they had gone, I didn't feel easy, and I started for the wharf on the side of the creek opposite the old mill, you know, and where the ferry starts. I see the leetle chap, Jimmy, a-shootin' ahead of me along the road over the mash and he got to the wharf before me. He went there, I spose, to meet 'em on their way back, but what a time they had, comin' back! I saw it a-comin' over the sea, a-scowlin' black and a-travelin' fast. It was a great big squall, and while the top of the cloud reached up into the sky and frowned there, the lower part of it

ruffled the sea and turned up a big drive of mist and rain. I could see it all, mind ye! My boat was not far from the wharf when that ere squall struck her. They ought to have let go the sheets and the sails would have jest flapped harmless. They didn't, and the wind come, drivin' along, ravin' and roarin', and threw that boat over as if it had been a mullein stalk by the side of the road! I sprang for a boat tied to the wharf and was off in less than no time, rowin' away for dear life. Then what did I see on the wharf but that leetle Jimmy a-kneelin' down and liftin' his white face toward that black cloud. 'He's a-prayin!' I said to myself, and didn't I row the harder! Thought I, 'When you got an innocent leetle chap like that on your side, it's worth while to put in.' The wind bothered me and so did the tide, and the rain come slashin' down. I swung my head round to get my bearin's, and I see that Fred a-doin' wonders. He turned out to be a splendid swimmer and a real hero. He caught up his mother and helped her grab the boat. Then he went to his father and helped him get a hold. It was an amazin'ly interestin' sight, that small chap on the wharf a-prayin' and the big boy swimmin' and helpin' his parents. I

got to 'em and got 'em all ashore, but I had a time of it! I can see 'em now, that chap on the wharf a-kneelin' and his brother out in the water 'savin' his folks, and the wind all the while, how it blew!"

Uncle Ben Bowler had finished his story and was patiently waiting for the applause sure to follow. During the silence of these brief moments of waiting, the wind could be heard roaring steadfastly, and if any one had faced the windows of the room, he would have noticed that the snow gathering on the window-ledges and along the lines of the sashes, had increased very much.

"A master storm!" remarked Mrs. Jones.

The next moment, a muffled while heavy rap on the door was audible, as if a person with gloved hands had pounded for admission.

"Who can that be?" said Mrs. Jones, starting up quickly. "Billy, just take the light to the door!"

Billy opened the door, and all heard somebody say, "Tavern about here anywhere?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Ask him to come in and warm himself," said Mrs. Jones.

The stranger entered at once. The snow

clinging to his hair gave him the look of an old man, but removing his black felt hat and shaking off the snow that whitened his figure, it was a young man that came forward and thankfully accepted the chair offered him.

"That's the one!" whispered the old sailor to Tim Shattuck.

"Not the one in your story?"

"The very one, sartin as I've got any eyes in my head. It is the big boy out in the water."

CHAPTER IX.

THE OTHER BOARDER.

“TIM,” his mother had said on one occasion, “by putting off one thing, you are always running into another thing.”

“Oh, mother,” said Tim, in his easy way, “that is only your notion.”

“Notions are worth something, young man, and you mark my words.”

Tim did mark his mother's words, this night of the winter storm. Arvie had now been a member of the Shattuck household two years. She occupied though only the front chamber. There was the parlor below still untenanted. The family would sometimes joke about “the other boarder,” and wonder where he or she might be. As yet, up to this winter night, there was no such person in existence.

Tim did not purpose to make so long a stay at Billy Jones'. He had promised

his mother to return home as promptly as possible.

"Billy, I'll stay to have a little talk with uncle," he said, "and then go home. Just as well to hold on a bit. I will have a little talk with Uncle Ben."

It was Uncle Ben who concluded he would have "a little talk" with the young people and tell his story.

"Just as well to stay through," Tim said, "and hear the old man's story."

By putting off one thing, he ran into another thing of very special moment. Whether for good or ill we shall see.

The stranger who looked like a big snowflake brought by the storm, had entered the Jones-cottage.

"I'll sit down a few minutes, thank you," he then said. At once, he attracted the eyes of all. Barkton rarely saw a handsomer young man. His black hair had been rumpled by the storm, but this intermeddling only gave it a certain grace and picturesqueness. His profile was very regular, Grecian in its style. His clear complexion contrasted vividly with the ruddy tinge the wind had rubbed into his cheeks. His eyes were a deep rich black, full of a pleasant light, that kept

brightening, then dying, in a fashion fascinating to any spectator. His voice was agreeable, full and rich and musical.

"If I had known," he said, "what a storm we were going to have, I would have come either sooner or later. It is a bad night and I walked over from the railroad station, for I couldn't seem to find any stage."

"Too bad!" murmured Mrs. Jones. The others one by one assented in their own way, for each one seemed to be sorry that this handsome young man should be put to any inconvenience by the storm.

"It is a bad night," remarked Uncle Ben Bowler, "but I war jest a-tellin' 'em of another storm that went ahead of this."

Then Uncle Ben looked inquisitively at the young man as if he would add, "I want to try you, sir, and see if you remember that other storm."

The stranger was not disconcerted by any reference to storms, and in response to Uncle Ben's remark and the look from his faded staring eyes, merely said, "Oh, yes, there must be greater storms, of course."

He chatted pleasantly awhile and then said, "I think I had better be going to look up that tavern. I am rather tired."

"I am going that way," remarked Tim, having concluded finally to make a move, "and I will go with you, if you would like to have me."

"Oh, you are very kind, and you are all very kind. I am much obliged to you all."

When he left, Mrs. Jones said, "How easy now! I should think he had known us always. And wasn't he handsome!"

"He certainly is very fine looking. Wonder what he is round this way for!" inquired Billy.

Uncle Ben did not make any comment. He was surprised to think this young man did not remember or did not choose to recall that other storm.

"That is the queerest thing I ever seed!" he said a few minutes later in his bedroom. "I'm disgusted."

Down the wintry, drifted road, toiled Tim and the stranger, battling with the storm.

"It seems to me that it grows worse and worse," remarked the stranger, as he held his head down and worked his way forward as if driving a battering-ram against the storm.

"You won't have to go far," shouted Tim to his companion.

"That is good!" was the reply halloosed to Tim.

When they had reached a little hollow in the highway protected by a grove of pines on either side of the road, Tim's companion said to him, "You can talk easy here. I wanted to ask if the tavern was the only place in the neighborhood where you could board?"

"N-n-n-o. Are you going to stay long?"

"Well, I must stay awhile. I am going to have a situation in the office of the canning factory."

"Oh, you the new book-keeper?"

"I suppose so—I engaged for that."

"Well, my mother has a spare room. I could speak to her about it."

"Thank you; I wish you would. And if you'll tell me where it is, I'll come round to-morrow and see it."

"There! The tavern is just where you see those three or four lights burning."

"All right! Thank you. It is close at hand. Thank you. Please speak to your mother."

When Tim entered the house, his mother said, "Well, Tim, you thought you would be home early, but I see you put it off."

"Yes, mother, and you said when I put off

one thing, I was quite sure to run into some other thing, and to-night I guess I run into the other boarder."

"You don't say, Tim!"

"Yes, I do."

Tim was correct. In twenty-four hours, Will Fairfax, book-keeper at the canning factory, was established in the front room so long waiting for its occupant.

The young man was popular at once with almost every one. He was liked in the counting-room by the superintendent, and was also a favorite with the hands in the factory. The person that did not like him was Uncle Ben Bowler. He was fond of the mysterious and marvellous, and to think that on a wild stormy night when an old sailor was telling of a hero, that very hero should come to his door! It was an opportunity for the canonization of heroism that could not be dismissed. To the old sailor's sore chagrin, Will Fairfax would not allow that he was the hero.

"I have seen you afore, young man," said Uncle Ben, two days after the storm, happening to meet him in the road.

"Oh—at—your house—the other night?"

"Why, when I picked you up."

"Picked me up!" said Will in surprise.

"Yes. Ain't you the young man in that boat off the mill-pond at Seaton, below the old mill, and I went out to you and picked you up? You did a splendid thing! You look like that youngster."

"Why no!" said the young man laughing. "I never saw that old mill in Seaton, and in fact I never was in the town. You are making some mistake."

"No, I ain't!" said the old man stoutly. "Now, you are pertendin'suthin' what ain't so."

"Why, I don't pretend anything at all."

Uncle Ben's head was shaking more persistently and emphatically than ever.

"I know I am right."

The young man's rich peals of laughter echoed along the road as he left Uncle Ben and continued his walk to the canning factory.

"The old fool! What is he thinking of?" queried Will. "He has got hold of the wrong person."

The effect of Uncle Ben's mistake on Will was to interest him in Seaton and the old mill.

"I would like to see that mill," he said. "I wonder how it looks."

When seen one day under circumstances little anticipated at the time of the old sailor's mistake, others than Will viewed it.

Outside of Will, the result of the incident so amusing to him, was to intensify the interest of the public in him. The young people especially were almost as tenacious as Uncle Ben in insisting that Will Fairfax should take the role assigned to him as "hero," but he steadily refused.

"Our 'other boarder,'" said Mrs. Shattuck one night to her husband, when they were alone with the singing tea-kettle on the stove, "our 'other boarder' is very popular. Whatever comes out of his being here, I shall hold Tim responsible. If Tim had come home promptly that night as he promised, all would have been right, or I hope it is all right now. I mean if anything wrong comes from it, Tim will be to blame."

"Oh, we will hope for the best," said her husband, who generally looked for the worst whatever he hoped. "How unlike are the four young people in our house!"

"I know it, Davis; real unlike. I am curious to see how they will all turn out. There is this Will. We don't know anything about him except what he says of himself, that he is an orphan, that he came from New York, where he saw Mr. Prentiss' advertisement for a book-keeper and answered

it. Here we have taken him at his own word—”

“And taken him right into our home.”

“I know it. Queer what an interest we take in the young man! I don’t believe there is anything bad in him, but what I am afraid of is lest he hasn’t backbone enough and may give way to wrong influences.”

“You can hardly call Barkton a backbone factory, if a young man don’t bring the article with him,” said Mr. Shattuck, indulging in a bit of pleasantry.

“I know it. Think of our tavern! That won’t help a young man. Well, to go on—how will Arvie turn out? She won’t give way to wrong influences. I call her queer and flighty, and if she takes a notion, she is like a horse that has got the bits in his mouth, and she will do just as she pleases. You can’t though, get her to do anything she thinks wrong, since she has been trying to be religious.”

“She goes to church every Sunday, I see.”

“I know it, and she gets May to go with her. Well, I don’t want to stick myself up to be better than other people unless I am,” remarked Mrs. Shattuck in self-defence.

Her conscience troubled her oftentimes since one of her own household had begun to

attempt a better life. In self-defence, Mr. Shattuck, whose conscience troubled him also, said in a subdued tone of voice, "That is where you are right, Sally."

"Then there is our May," continued Mrs. Shattuck. "She is a real level-headed girl, bright and up to the mark every time. I wish Tim was as prompt. A real well-meaning boy—"

"Yes," echoed Mr. Shattuck, who did not venture to depreciate the worth of his own offspring, unless his wife set the example.

"Only I wish he wouldn't go it easy and say 'time enough' so much. He will get his fingers nipped in an awful door-crack some time, Davis."

"Afraid he will, wife."

"However, Tim is real bright and smart, and I wouldn't let anybody else run him down."

This, Mr. Shattuck very well understood. Without any permission from his wife, he had once attempted to rate Tim at his proper value, and she emphatically objected.

For a while, there was silence in the kitchen. Husband and wife were busily thinking however. Mrs. Shattuck did not say it aloud, for it was a conscience-movement

she was sometimes aware of since Arvie's changed life. In her soul she was saying, "I feel a responsibility for these four young people in the house and wish I had help to meet this responsibility." Mr. Shattuck had the same conviction of accountability, and though he would not confess it, felt the same need of help.

CHAPTER X.

THE SNOW-SHOE CLUB.

AT the canning factory, people were coming and going almost continually. One day, there appeared a young man whose immediate disappearance would have been for the welfare of everybody that subsequently and intimately knew him in Barkton. He wrote his name, True Winthrop. He had black eyes, black hair, and a clear complexion. Will Fairfax had these features, but had an honest look of kindly wishes for all. In True's eyes were the violence of the storm, the shadows of the night, and a certain deceit whose expression was this: "The parents of the young man possessing these eyes made a great mistake when they named him True. He is the very opposite of true. He is the untruth embodied. Don't trust him. He is bad as an enemy, but worse as a friend. Don't expect him to say a sincere word or do a sincere thing."

At the canning factory, hardly any of the young people liked him and yet all disliked to differ from him. Something gave him a powerful influence. He was a person of strong will, abounding in expedients, and by a certain force of onset backed up with profuse favors for those who agreed with him, True Winthrop was quite certain to carry whatever he attempted among the young people.

"He can't move me," declared Mrs. Shattuck. "I don't like that black, evil eye."

"I don't like him either, but I can't seem to do only as he wants me," said Arvie. May said the same thing, and so did Tim.

"He can't move me," again declared Mrs. Shattuck, compressing her lips and assuming a look of firmness and hardness, as if she were about to turn into a stone with which to confront Winthrop.

Somehow, the "other boarder" seemed to like him or at least was willing to endure him as a companion. Almost at once, True fastened himself on Will as if instinctively, like the leech attaching itself to the human flesh. Will was susceptible to flattery. True detected this sensitiveness. He sandwiched his speech with certain very complimentary allusions to

Will, told him how handsome he was, that he had brains enough and that all he needed was money. He was careful to assure him that a canning factory, though its aid was extremely acceptable to True just now, was not the station in life to which True or Will was naturally adapted. True hung so close upon Will's heels that there was little room for Will's acquaintance with others, but for some reason, True concluded to admit a number to a fraction of his own distinguished friendship.

One night, after work, when some of the young men, including Tim and Will, were lingering in the entry of the factory, True shouted, "Boys, come on; let's have a snow-shoe club! Of course there is exercise but still more fun in it. Take these splendid moonlight nights, who wants to be poking in a stived up room! We can just be cutting over the fields, you know, taking a run to the neighboring towns—and having supper, hot, you know—going about, astonishing the folks—why, we can go up to the top of Moose Mountain easy as not—build a bonfire up there! You know we can have a uniform, gray or white or red flannel with fancy trimmings, have races and give prizes—"

By this time, True had worked his auditors up to such a pitch of enthusiasm that his speech was blocked by their loud and increasing expressions of approval. The idea of a uniform tickled the fancy of one. "Supper" appealed to the greed of another. A third clutched at that idea of a prize. Lovers of "fun" were moved by this appeal to their favorite passion. When it was once decided to have a club, the difficulty was not to find candidates for membership, but to shut them out. Old men might still prefer to walk, moonlight nights, in their boots, but all the youth of Barkton longed for snow-shoes. The club was speedily organized. True Winthrop at his own suggestion became president, and Will Fairfax as the result of a like movement by the same modest president, was made secretary. Disliking the president and liking the secretary, Tim was sorry to see this arrangement, for he knew that such proximity in official places would throw the two into one another's society oftener than would be advantageous for Will.

Mrs. Shattuck had a word to say upon this subject.

"Tim, where does that True—or Untrue I should say—board?"

“At the tavern, mother.”

“I wish he was farther off. I see that Will rather takes to True, or True takes to him, and I suppose Will is likely to be down there, and the tavern is no place for him. Do look after Will and exercise the right influence over him.”

“I will try, mother.”

“When does your Show Club—your—I guess that is a good name for it!”

“Snow-Shoe Club, mother. When does it have a run, were you going to ask? To-night.”

“Tim, I am going to get up a Stay-at-home Club. Seems to me you are out every night.”

“Oh, it is exercise, mother, exercise.”

“Well, what are you going to have to-night for exercise?”

“Oh, a run across the fields to Lewisville,—to the old stage tavern at the four corners—and then on the way back, we are going to have a trial-race in the Great Meadow.”

“Going to the Corners and turn round at once and come home?”

“Oh, step into the old tavern you know, warm up a bit you know, and then come back.”

“Well, see that you warm up at the stove. That old tavern has been a real spider-web for a lot of silly flies.”

“No flies going to-night.”

“I can name a number. Now you look out for Will. He is social, and you have an eye out for him.”

“Don’t worry, mother.”

“I won’t, Tim, if you will do a little worrying for yourself.”

“Mother, there’s not the least danger. You know I hate liquor. I wouldn’t touch it for the world.”

“I hope not ; but look out, and look out for Will. Forewarned is forearmed, they say.”

It was a splendid night. The moon was one round orb of silver, a stainless shield borne aloft by the night, and in response to it, field and road and house-roof held up their snowy surfaces, as if challenging the moon to a contest for purity. The air was still. There was no cutting blast vexing the traveller that might still be in the road.

The club turned out almost to a man. It had been finally settled that the costume of the club should be a white flannel suit with scarlet trimmings, scarlet caps with a white fez, and long scarlet hose. Each racer carried a

horn in one hand and a little string of bells in the other. Some of the club also carried staves.

“Ready!” shouted the president. “Peter Tombs is our guide to-night. We spurn all highways and go in as straight a line as possible to the Corners. Away, Mercuries! Lift your wings!”

This classic allusion was not understood by the majority of the club. Some supposed it meant the mercury in the thermometer, and that the language was aptly figurative and it meant, “Don’t look at a thermometer, but scorning it, away!” As for the wings, Peter Tombs did not know that Mercury had wings on his feet, and that this language of True was a specimen of the elegant learning of the “president.” Peter clapped his hand to his shoulder as if expecting to find feathers. He did not find anything there but a piece of dirty, scarlet braid. He gave a piercing toot with his horn, jingled his bells—the grand signal for the start—and dashed away, the club following! Such a tooting of other horns and jingling of other bells! No Barkton winter had ever witnessed such a glorious display. The president was proud of his success. There was a large group of hurrahing specta-

tors, for True had invited friends to see the club off and also to witness and welcome its return. He did not go so far as to say that a warm lunch arranged by friends at the tavern, its expense met by them also, would be exceedingly agreeable to the returning club. He left behind though a number of strong hints to lie as seed in the fertile minds of friends, which seed he hoped by the latter part of the evening would thickly sprout and blossom and bear fruit, growing into that very desirable object, a hot lunch at the tavern.

"A most successful start!" cried True Winthrop, then bringing his horn to his mouth and winding a sharp peal that must have startled the man in the moon if he had had any ears besides silver ones. A stunning blast from all the club echoed the notes of their leader's horn.

Jotham Trestle lived in the house next to the tavern where the club started. He was a fat, red-haired, testy man, and neighbors were always obliged to be careful in dealing with him. That night, Jotham had the toothache, and his temper was less prepared than usual to resist any assaults upon it. Sitting in his arm-chair, holding his hand to his face, he

caught that loud, ringing blast in the road. He jumped up, ran to the window and looked out. He could only see those wriggling forms out in the road.

"The imps!" he exclaimed. "Wish they had my toothache! They wouldn't be blowin' horns and troublin' the neighbors."

To his surprise and wrath, the "imps" turned into his yard. The club only obeyed orders to follow their guide and spurn all roads. This was their first "spurn." They expected to go in a straight line over to the Corners, and if Jotham's house had been an immense bead on that line, they were ready to go over the roof. Their route, though, lay down his cow yard at the right of the house, then through the orchard and so across the open fields. Jotham imagined the object of their detour in leaving the road, and forgetting that he had a toothache, he rushed to the back door and there he stood bawling, "Do you know that you chaps are a-trespassin'?"

No notice was taken of this at first, simply because a man's voice has little chance for a hearing in the midst of a chorus of twenty horns.

"I say!" Jotham continued to shout. Then he added some not very soft epithets

which hurt when they struck, and by degrees the entire club halted. It was an interesting scene, that uniformed band in the white moonlight, all halting in Jotham's yard and facing this angry fat man out there on the doorstep, with his "jumping toothache."

"I want to know if you're aware that you're trespassin', making this racket with your horns, on other folks' property?" shouted Jotham.

"It is only our Snow-shoe Club exercising," replied True with dignity of language, but his tone of voice was angry.

"Wall! put your snow-shoes on in your own house and make your racket there; or better clap your old shoes over your mouth."

True's reply was to bring his horn to his lips and give a loud, deafening toot. Then he sprang away, the club following, blowing horns and ringing their bells.

"You Injuns!" shouted Jotham's toothache (for it was this rather than Jotham making the reply). "I'll be even with you yet if I have to set up all night to do it."

The club though heard nothing beside their horns. It was now a run down through Jotham's orchard, then across field and pasture to the Corners. It was not a lengthy journey, only three miles, and was carefullv

planned, so as to give the members of the club a long season of rest after their very, very fatiguing exercise. Three miles away, these "winged Mercuries" in snow and scarlet, before the thin string of spectators drawn up on the old stage tavern steps to receive them, seemed to be lifted above the level of ordinary humanity. They came down to it when they surrounded the supper tables of the tavern. They then showed that they could eat like humbler mortals, such as "Billy Trott," "Sammy Hyde," "Tim Shattuck," and some of them showed that they could drink. Mrs. Shattuck had prophesied the latter, and Tim knew it might be attempted but did not positively anticipate it. The president, though, was on hand to show what such organizations may exist for, and suddenly proposed over a glass of wine the health of the Snow-shoe Club. When in a company anybody that is a positive character proposes any course in his positive way, there are enough weak wills present to be attracted to the stronger will and yield to it. Some of these weaker ones, including Will Fairfax, now lifted glasses which had been mysteriously filled from some source, and at the same time two bottles of wine were started on their travels toward the

snow-shoes not thus furnished. Tim Shattuck did not mean to drink the glass which somebody had filled for him. It was his custom to delay any action. He grasped the glass as if irresolute, though he did not really intend to drink. He played with it. He even lifted it. A voice was saying to him, "Set that glass down! Others are looking! Will Fairfax sees you!"

Will's glass was near his lips, but Will's black eyes were not on the glass; they were fastened on Tim. What would Tim do? If he had promptly pushed that glass away, Will also would have set his wine on the table. Will though saw Tim playing with the crimson tempter. He saw Tim lifting it. Tim saw Will's dark eyes still turned towards him.

"Set your glass down!" cried the warning voice again.

The successes of life hinge on the prompt improvement of opportunities. This is true of movements affecting our own individual future and it has an exemplification in the lives of others. The time to influence Will Fairfax and turn him aside from any threatened course of drinking was that night at the Corners, that very hour when undecided he held his glass in his hands and watched Tim

Shattuck. Tim failed to decide promptly and improve his opportunity. Will concluded that Tim would drink, as the distance between Tim's lips and Tim's glass steadily lessened. In this hour of indecision, a painter would have found materials for a vivid sketch. Not only Tim and Will were interested in this juncture of circumstances, but others watched the two. True like a tempter fixed his evil eyes on Will and said, "Drink." When Will lifted his glass still higher and poured down the wine, Tim planted his glass on the table. The latter had saved himself, but he had lost his opportunity to help his neighbor. What would others do?

There was in the club a positive temperance element, and it refused to follow the lead of the president. True attributed this to Tim, and shot several angry glances toward him. The supper closed very unsatisfactorily.

"It took you long enough time to decide not to take that wine which my courtesy provided," said True to Tim after the supper.

"Courtesy will let people decide to refuse wine if they wish, and it will not press it or any article on the table upon a guest," said Tim.

"Lot of courtesy about you!" said the

president advancing, and raising his hand as if he would strike Tim.

"I have enough to take care of you if you mean any trouble," said Tim, laughing. He was a muscular fellow and quickly could have overpowered True.

"Oh, come, come, boys!" exclaimed Peter, the guide, "let's go off friendly."

"I am all ready," said Tim, determined he would not do anything to provoke trouble. "Let's start at once!"

Several shouted and blew their horns and a few bells jingled out a feeble concert. The departure was tame in spirit. The club though proceeded to carry out the programme of the evening, and led by their guide, moved across the open, white fields toward the Great Meadow. This was a mile distant from the tavern at Barkton, and was a splendid race-course for the club. The moon poured down its lustre on this wide, white field. Each side of the meadow was lined with a grove of spruces, as if many spectators in emerald had crowded to the edge of this broad arena and silently were looking on. The prospect of the race revived the somewhat lagging interest of the club. The race proposed was simply a run from one side of

the field to the other, a good quarter of a mile. Two warnings were given.

"Be a little easy with your shoes," suggested the guide. "Guess they will stand it, but—"

A loud laugh interrupted the speaker.

"The idea!" said the president. "Going to have a race and then advised to do it easy! Our snow-shoes ought to stand the strain."

"Ought! that is so, but I have seen some signs of givin' out," replied Peter.

"And remember, boys, that through the Great Meadow runs a piece of an old stone-wall," warned Tim.

"Well, what if it does?" asked Will in an impatient tone. He had never spoken in that way to Tim before, but the wine drunk was working on his temper.

"Oh! people who have lived in the country know there may be special danger in an old wall perhaps not fully snowed over and yet not sticking up enough to be seen."

"Guess we can be on the watch for it," growled True, who wished to hear as little as possible from Tim.

"All right!" said Tim; "go it with your eyes open though."

The racers were drawn up in line.

"At a peal from my horn, go it, boys!" cried True. Away they went, striding, gliding, shouting, pushing ahead. Soon there was a collapse of several shoes. They had not been honestly manufactured, and now helplessly dangled from the soles of various Mercuries, and two of these ambitiously named racers went sprawling in the snow. Tim was on a line with the front runners. Suddenly, just ahead, he saw protruding from the snow several black ridges.

"Look out!" he shouted, avoiding these signs of trouble, even as a bather would heed the projecting fins of a shark. Some of the racers did not wish to see any occasion of trouble. Among these was the president, headstrong with wine. But the wine that makes a man heady, makes his feet uncertain. Away went the president, landing in a heap. Will Fairfax followed as ingloriously.

Others pitched one by one, till the direction of that ruined wall was plainly indicated by the collapsed forms of those who had tripped over it. Angry exclamations and peals of laughter also rose along that line of prostrate Mercuries, but Tim and half a dozen others kept on, announcing their arrival at the goal by a blast on their horns.

"That old wall!" shouted the president.

"These old shoes!" cried several.

"Billy Jones comes out ahead, and Tim Shattuck is second," said Peter, the guide, who had been made also umpire.

And the prizes—they were never heard from. It is easy to vote money out of a treasury provided money be in it. The club had exhausted its finances and the victors wisely postponed any consideration of their claims.

The president had desired that the club should make a triumphal appearance at the tavern in Barkton. Half-a-dozen of the Mercuries though were wingless and modestly took the nearest road for home. Others lived like Tim and Will this side of the tavern, and did not care to travel there simply for the privilege of walking back again. The president could not hold out any positive inducement like "a hot lunch" at the tavern, and if he had been able, the temperance young men would not have followed him. The drinking at the Corners had wounded seriously the interest of this element in any protracted celebration. One by one, the Mercuries dropped out of the line of march, and the president was left to himself. Alone, he neared Jotham Trestle's

house. There was a light burning in the kitchen.

"He is up still," concluded True, "but I'll slip quietly through the yard."

The toothache man though was prepared for any snow-shoer that might trespass on his premises.

"I have got to sit up with this toothache," declared Jotham, "and I might as well be occupied. I'll leave Towser out in the back entry, jest to have him handy."

Towser was an immense bull-dog with an eye like a dragon's and teeth like a wolf's.

True stole noiselessly round the corner of the barn. Did he see that stout wire stretching from Jotham's back door to the barn? The wire was sensitive as any nerve in Jotham's gums, for the moment that True struck it, there was a tumble, and then came a passionate outcry from the president.

"Bow-wow-wow!" went the dog whose ears caught the sound, and then came the voice of Jotham.

"Towser, stay here! I wouldn't stay long, friend!" he shouted to the president. "I wouldn't stay long looking at the moon, for the beast is vicious and I may not be able to hold him."

"The beast!" growled the president.
"There are two of them at that door."

He went hastily out of the yard, leaving Towser still barking, while Jotham told his wife asking at the head of the stairs for an explanation of the noise, that it was all right and his toothache had left him.

"It made some noise a-going," asserted Mrs. Trestle.

The sole surviving member of the club—still on snow-shoes—stole to the door of the now darkened tavern. The grumbling "stable boy," prostrate on a settee in the office that he might receive any belated callers, arose and let a disgusted excursionist in. The moon looked down on a white, deserted road, and on white, lonely fields everywhere. The expectations and disappointments of the evening were soon smothered in welcome sleep. An influence was left behind though, sure, in the life of Will Fairfax at least, to lead to a sad disaster; but it might have been different if Tim Shattuck had been more prompt in setting down his wine-glass.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DEBATING SOCIETY.

THE months slipped by. Interest in the Snow-shoe Club melted away even as the flakes of January yield to the suns of April. The next thing that True Winthrop proposed was a Debating Society.

"I am glad of it," declared Mrs. Shattuck to Tim. "Anything to divert Will and break up his interest in that Winthrop."

"Put it the other way. Anything to break up True's interest in Will Fairfax."

"Either way, Tim. I know what folks say, that when the Snow-shoe Club met at the Corners—you know when—it was True who led Will on and asked him to drink."

Tim did not care to think very much about that club-rally and allowed his mother to continue the conversation.

"Since then, they say that Will has been seen with True Winthrop in places where people go to drink far more than to eat. Wel-

come to the Debating Society or anything else good, I say. When does it meet?"

"To-morrow night."

"And where?"

"At the school-house."

The next evening, about twenty of the young people met at the school-house. Each one was required to bring a candle, so that the room was starred with lights. True Winthrop did not wait to be invited to the chair, but took it and called the meeting to order.

"Of course," he said, "ladies and gentlemen, I do not mean to usurp the president's chair, for you may wish to elect some one else."

After this statement, no one cared to vote against True as first officer of the club. As in the organization of the Snow-shoe Club, the president so worked the case that Will Fairfax was made secretary of the new society.

"We might take up now," suggested True, "the different subjects we wish to discuss. Will the society please name some?"

There was silence. The members looked at one another in perplexity. On the bench that was used in school hours for recitation purposes, sat Tim Shattuck, Arvie Estey and May Shattuck. Directly behind these, in one of the scholars' desks, sat Billy Jones. He

leaned forward and whispered to his neighbors, "Let's take up temperance."

"Oh, I wouldn't start that yet," said Tim, speaking after his usual style, "but let's defer it awhile."

"We need it bad enough," urged Billy.

"Yes, but there's time enough for that. Take it up further along," replied Tim.

"There'll be opposition to it now."

"There will be opposition any time, Tim."

"May be, but let's wait."

Billy leaned back in his chair, was silent a moment, and then rose.

"Mr. President," said Billy, "I move that we discuss temperance."

The perplexity, apathy, silence of the meeting went at once. The effect of the motion was as stimulating as if some one had swept out of the school-house with a wave of the hand all the candles, and substituted a dazzling electric light. The members of the 'Debating Society' with a startled look glanced at one another and then faced the president. His face too, had undergone a change. If fangs had protruded from his mouth, his face would have suggested that of a snake struck and now turning to sting.

"That motion is not seconded," he hissed.

The members saw that their president was offended and nobody seemed ready to second the motion.

"Nobody seems to care for that subject and I think we had better let it alone," remarked the president, the cloud on his face thinning out and then yielding to a smile. The society experienced a feeling of relief when their head patronizingly smiled. One of the younger members though was troubled by his conscience enough to pipe up in a lisping voice, "Thecond the motion!"

The president's smile vanished and the thunder-cloud was back on his face. There was lightning too darting from his eyes.

"I would say to the society that this is a political question and we don't want to lug politics in here."

This seemed to be an awful sin in the view of many, and so great was its enormity that those guilty beings, Billy and that lisping supporter, felt their knees shaking.

The president again looked happy as he noticed the effect of his words. "It don't seem necessary to vote, as the meeting is not interested," said True, "and I won't ask you to hold up your hands."

Tim Shattuck sat next to Arvie Estey, at

her left. He felt a stir under his neighbor's shawl.

"I believe that girl is going to vote," thought Tim. He rested a hand on the uneasy girl and whispered, "Don't vote. It will make trouble. Put it off till some other time."

Tim had laid his hand in the wrong place, for she was armless there! Instantly, Arvie turned toward Tim a look of triumph and up went her only hand, firm and steady! It seemed to Tim as if she even rose from her seat that she might thrust her hand as high as possible. The effect was instantaneous and very damaging to the president's side. May Shattuck raised her hand. Billy Jones took courage again, and lifted his. There was a general show of hands now, and the president looked aghast.

"The society is making a mistake," shouted True.

"Fifteen of us!" cried somebody.

"Call for the other side!" shouted a second.

"Order!" roared True. "The presiding officer will conduct the meeting."

This rebuke was received by the meeting with laughter amid which the president called for "the contrary minded." Only Will Fair-

fax and two others voted against Billy's motion. Tim Shattuck did not express his mind, and for a very effective reason. He was in favor of a discussion of the subject and could not vote against the motion. He wished though to defer the discussion and would not vote for the motion, fearful lest the discussion might come up at once. The president was vigilant.

"Well," he said with a sarcastic smile, "the motion didn't say *when* to discuss temperance, and I guess we won't be in a hurry to introduce politics."

Many at once looked pleased. They did not wish to hasten the agitation, fearing like Tim it might make a division and hence trouble. Having satisfied their consciences by voting for the motion, they thought they need do nothing further. Suddenly, out rang a sharp, clear voice: "I move we do it at once, next meeting, soon as we get here."

It was Arvie Estey.

"Second the motion," said another voice just as decided. It was May Shattuck. The temperance wing led by Billy Jones began to applaud.

"Silence! Meeting is getting disorderly!" thundered the president, lightning darting

from both eyes, and fangs threatening to come out of his mouth any moment. "She didn't say do what next time! I think we had better do nothing and break up rather than to introduce politics."

"*Do* temperance, I mean," cried Arvie. "Debate temperance at the next meeting."

Again there was applauding. The meeting now was beyond any fear of the president's opinion, and showed so unmistakably their determination to discuss this "political" subject, and at the very next meeting, that True submitted and declared the sense of the meeting to be in favor of Arvie's motion.

"I did think I would resign," said the president at the close of the meeting, "rather than see the society making a mistake, but—"

Here he tried to smile, for True loved a front position and popularity in it and wished to have the good opinion of the society while president of it.

"But—I have concluded to—stay and take a hand in the debate and show how mistaken some of you chaps are."

While the society preferred that this great officer should remain rather than withdraw in anger and damage the organization, the applause following this announcement was feeble.

The temperance members did not wish to approve of the opinion that they were "mistaken chaps."

When Mrs. Shattuck's household had all gathered under her roof again, that night, she asked May and Arvie about the meeting. From a full well, a speedy stream can be pumped, and a long one, and the girls responded at once, telling a very full story.

"Oh, mother, you ought to have seen Arvie—if she didn't make the motions, before them all too!" exclaimed May, admiringly.

"I hardly knew what I was doing when I got a-going," said Arvie, her usually pale cheeks flushed with excitement, "but I meant to do something."

"Well, what did Tim do?" asked Mrs. Shattuck.

"Oh, he wanted to put the thing off," replied May.

"Put it off! That's like Tim. Put it *on*, I say. Here are our young people and the whole town, I think, needing to take a stand on the subject of temperance. It is a real good subject. And what did Will Fairfax do?" continued Mrs. Shattuck.

"Oh, he looked sorrowful, I thought," re-

plied Arvie. "He voted on True Winthrop's side."

"Yes," said May, "he sat there as secretary, you know, his paper and pencil in hand, and he just looked—he stared, you might say with his black eyes. He hardly smiled. Some laughed and he tried to, but he didn't succeed very well. He did not look easy one bit."

Will Fairfax was not easy in his conscience. He had made in True Winthrop's company several false steps, and the subject before the Debating Society reminded him of his mistakes and his danger. He was in a state of great perplexity. Before the next meeting of the society, a surprise came to him which made more interesting his situation.

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER ARRIVAL.

“**W**HY, Dot!” exclaimed Will Fairfax, looking up from his desk at which he sat busily examining a day-book.

The person he addressed was a young lady about—it was hard to estimate her age. Whether she were thirteen or seventeen, it was hard to tell. Her face said, “I am seventeen.” Her stature said, “I am thirteen.” The general style of her features said that she was a Fairfax. While her eyes were blue and not black—yet the brows and lashes that were black, would give such eyes at night a look almost as jet as Will’s.

She had the air of one who does not know whether she has done a wise or unwise thing, who feels that she is not expected and yet here she is, just here where her friends are, and must be taken care of somehow.

“Now, you didn’t expect me, I know, Will.”

"Well—no—I didn't have the slightest idea that you were anywhere in this neighborhood, but—I am—glad to see you, Dot."

He spoke hesitatingly, for he was making up his mind whether he were glad to see her or not. On the whole, he was glad, and yet he had some misgivings.

"The truth is, Will, I was driven to come. I did not know what else to do—where else to go—"

Though not actually crying, tears gave a pathetic lustre to her beautiful eyes, and Will Fairfax was the last person in the world to resist a woman's tears.

"Oh—oh—don't worry, Dot. Come in! Don't stand out there. I am really—glad—to see you. Come inside the rail."

He opened the diminutive gate in the plain, pine railing, and admitted her to that privileged pen sacred to such personages as the superintendent or one of the "company."

"Besides, it is rainy, Dot. I started a fire in the stove. You will need it, maybe, to dry you."

It was a rainy day, both wet and chilly, one of those days in spring when the spirit of winter seems to entertain an idea that its reign is not over, and it comes back to darken

the shadows under the trees, to chill the winds and give them a story to tell of dreary Arctic lands and far-off northern seas, to look over the small stock of leaves on the trees and selecting the little things that have begun to die as soon as beginning to live, whirl them away as if it were the autumn-time.

Dot held out a very prettily shaped foot to the stove, and Will saw at once how wet, soaked, muddled it was.

"Why, Dot, how did you travel over here? Pardon me for not asking before. There is no stage at this hour. You didn't walk over here from the railroad station? Now, that wasn't prudent!"

"Yes, I did," she said, lifting to Will a pair of eyes shaded at first with a sense of foolishness and shame to think she had done this thing. Then up out of their rich, dark depths shot a light as of a consciousness of triumph to think that one so small and naturally so timid had accomplished such a feat.

"Yes, I did, Will, for there was nothing but tramping that could be done. Yes, and I think I know every inch of that road, every tree, every field. It is just pressed into my memory. I think I could go over that road in

the night and tell where I was. It is a dismal road in the rain."

There came a time when this same Dot had occasion to travel this road in the same manner, and it was a memorable occasion as we shall see.

"Look here, Dot! You must not stay here. You will get cold."

"Oh, I had this umbrella."

"Well, now—"

He stopped and looked out of the window.

"It is almost time for me to go—can't do much more to-night—and I'll take you up to my boarding-house, where my landlady, Mrs. Shattuck, will make you comfortable. And see! If you don't mind it, we will ride up in that express wagon, Dot. That will protect you."

"Oh, I don't care for the wagon."

Will rushed to the door of the office, thrust his head out into the rain, called, and then Dot heard somebody without say, "Whoa, there!"

"All right, Jerry!"

He turned to Dot.

"All ready, little girl."

She seemed pleased to hear him use this title, though it suggested her slight stature.

Her eyes flashed out a joyous light, and she said blithely,

“Here I am, giant!”

The team was a big covered wagon drawn by four horses. In the rear part, were several empty boxes used for the transportation of canned goods.

“Won’t you ride up on the seat?” asked the driver.

“No, I thank you, Jerry. We will get in back there and shall be out of the way. You may let us out please at Mrs. Shattuck’s. There, Dot,” he added, as he sat down on a big, empty box, “we shall be secure here. Rain can’t trouble us here, that is sure.”

“No, Will; snug here!”

She heard with a sense of satisfaction the rain beat on the black roof of the wagon. It reminded her that she was within and not without. It was so much better too in a driving, cold spring rain to be travelling on wheels and not travelling on foot. Adjusting her voice so that Will could hear it and yet it be inaudible to the driver, she said, “But I hav’n’t told you why I came.”

“No,” he said, a feeling of dread creeping over him. He had been trying to imagine

what she possibly had in mind when she started for Barkton.

“Well, Will, I lost my place—no fault of mine—but my employers have failed and every clerk was discharged last night. That left me without a place. I had made the payment for the stone, you know, and that with my board bill took all I had, save just enough to get here. Then I said, ‘now instead of waiting here, trying to get something to do and be an expense to Will—for there is my board, you know, that will be running up—I will just go to Barkton—right off you know, for when there is no money, folks must act all the quicker, and perhaps where Will is book-keeper, I said, I may get a chance to work’”—

“In the canning factory?” he asked. That was all he said in words, but his tone implied that he did not care to have this Dot just a hand in a canning factory.

She caught his tone and interpreted that, rather than distinctly heard his question. It was a disappointment to her. This daring and venturesome Dot expected praise as the heroine of this story of a cold, cold tramp in the rain, and also for her willingness to can tomatoes and pickles rather than be an expense to Will. Instead of words of commen-

dation, she had met with a reception of doubtful warmth, and now there was this significant inflection of voice that meant everything where hardly anything was said. She made no reply. Will was as ready to interpret her silence as she was to understand his tone. He felt sorry that he had not appreciated Dot's efforts. As for her payment of a certain "stone"—he knew what that meant. He could seem to see it rising up out of the rainy dreariness of a lonely cemetery, the stone covering a grave that some people preferred to keep unknown because the life had been a failure. Will was now thinking busily.

Dot had said with all the force of a woman's consecration, "The grave shall have its stone, if I have to pay for it." And as for the working as a "hand" in the canning factory, if it did not hurt such girls as May Shattuck and Arvie Estey, Will asked himself "would it hurt Dot?" It certainly would not hurt the canned fruit. How very toothsome would be the strawberries that Dot's tapering little fingers might help "put up!" He found himself laughing at the idea, so swift was the change of feeling in his mercurial temperament.

"Why, what do you laugh at?" said a voice.

His thoughts came back at once to the jolting express-wagon, to the sound of the clattering rain on the canvas-roof, and to the slender figure whose pressure against his shoulder he could feel.

"Dot, I was laughing to think how good 'strawberries'—say—might taste that my little girl canned here in the factory."

This brought Dot into the sunshine and she laughed also. Her laugh was very rich, like the echoing of a silver bell.

"Then you will let me go into the canning factory, Will, and earn my way?"

"Oh, I guess we can fix it. But here is Mrs. Shattuck's, where I board. Jerry, we get out here."

"Whoa, there!" shouted Jerry.

The two passengers on a rear-box dismounted and hastened into the house.

"Mrs. Shattuck," said Will, bringing Dot forward into the light of the kerosene lamp burning on the table already set for supper, "here is my sister Dorothy, or Dot, as I call her. If you will make her comfortable, I shall be obliged to you."

Mrs. Shattuck eyed with interest this di-

minutive young lady standing at Will's side.

"I am very glad to see Dorothy—Dot—which is it?" said the older lady, stammering in her embarrassment.

"Anything you please!" cried Dot and so cordially that Mrs. Shattuck felt at home with her immediately.

"I don't know where to put her," Mrs. Shattuck was saying to herself, "but my! I can stand her up in any corner, she is so little. Let's see!"

The result of this landlady's thinking was that Arvie might take her as a companion in that big, roomy front chamber, and to this arrangement Arvie readily consented.

When Mrs. Shattuck went upstairs an hour later, she found the two girls chatting before an open fire Arvie had kindled on the broad, blackened hearth. They were crouching on the floor side by side, watching the fire and telling stories about the great city with which they both were familiar.

"Mrs. Shattuck, I am getting along nicely!" said Dot, rising at once and gathering up the long folds of the dress which Arvie had offered Dot in place of her wet one. "I really feel as

if Barkton had a permanent resident. I feel quite at home."

Dot became a resident of Barkton. For those wishing to work in the department of fruits, there was no employment at present in the factory. Dot went to work, however, in the department of the cans themselves, helping prepare them for that busy season when the factory would sometimes run into the night and even through it. By and by, she helped fill the cans, and as Will anticipated, it did seem as if the preserves which Dot's fingers had touched, were much the sweeter.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MEMORABLE DEBATE.

THERE was a crowded school-house at the time of the temperance debate. Several well-known acquaintances were there, the Flitners, Tom Parlin, Barnabas Locke and others. Of course, the Shattucks were present. May Shattuck was there, her sweet, intelligent face brightened with a look of eager anticipation. Besides these, were Arvie Estey, nervously expectant, and the diminutive Dot, with her eyes so full of rich lustre. Uncle Ben Bowler, the old sailor, had come for various reasons. He had made the acquaintance of True Winthrop, and was about concluding that True must be the strange hero in the old story. He wished to strengthen his convictions, and thought that the debate of the evening would give him a long and leisurely chance to inspect True Winthrop. He had also been hired by True to assist in preparing a platform for the speakers on this occasion,

and he wished very naturally to see that it was in readiness. The platform had been built out of dry goods boxes, and chanced to be rather weak in the centre. The architect and constructor, whom Uncle Ben had assisted, was Mr. Shattuck.

- "There, Uncle Ben," said Mr. Shattuck, laying his hand on this extemporized platform, "I think this will stand, but it will be sure to stand if it has a prop under it, just there in the centre. I have a nice prop, a stout end of a joist at home in my shed, and I will let Tim bring it down before the meeting and clap it under."

"That will do," replied Uncle Ben. "Solid as a rock then."

Mr. Shattuck could not be at the school-house that evening, but Tim said he would take the joist there and see that it was in its place.

"Tim," said his mother just before tea, "I heard your father say something about getting a piece of joist out in the shed and then taking it to the school-house after supper. Hadn't you better get it now and have it on hand in the kitchen? Then you won't forget it."

"Oh, mother, I will look after it." Tim spoke rather impatiently. He had agreed to

say something on the temperance-side of the debate, but as usual he deferred preparation until the eleventh hour, and now at the eleventh hour he was nervously collecting materials for a "speech." The more he strove to collect, the smaller his collection seemed to be. Still hoping that something satisfactory might come to him, he started after supper for the school-house, but he went without that "prop." His thoughts were no more upon it than upon the pines of Moose Mountain. When he arrived at the school-house, as few people had gathered, he left it thinking that solitude and the cool night air might be favorable for forensic preparation. After he had gone, Uncle Ben arrived.

"Tim Shattuck been here?" he asked a boy whom he found in a front seat.

"Yes, sir, and he's gone again."

"Ah," concluded Uncle Ben, "then Tim has looked after things and it is all right."

Instead, it was all wrong. Tim's speech, while out doors, would not easily come to him. There was a young moon in the sky. This sometimes supplies fancies to poets, but its presence was very distracting to-night.

"Oh, you moon," he said impatiently, "what are you up there for? Why don't you

help me? What are you looking down on me for?"

Just then a seemingly lucky thought came to him.

"What is the moon looking down upon?" he reflected. "Imagine the moon looking down upon—a temperance landscape—oh, good! I've got it! I've got it!"

Here he made an impressive gesture with his right hand, pointing at an adjoining farmhouse belonging to a well-known temperance man.

"There is that thrifty home, the abode of temperance, and there—"

The building next to the school-house was the canning factory.

"I'll skip that, but I might well put it in, for temperance makes the canning business good. Let me see! 'Behold those fields covered with thriving crops—and they will be—this is the work of temperance! The old church on the green, white in the moonlight, that is temperance.' Why, I can go on that way, and get a lot of things to speak for temperance, well-filled barns, stores with happy tradesmen in them, shops where people are well employed—yes, I've got it! Then on the other hand, to show intemperance, I can

say, 'Behold homes where the windows are stuffed with rags, and barns where the cattle have been sold, and stores that have no goods to sell, and—so on.' Yes, I've got it! That is a great deal better than to fuss a day or two over what you have to say. Nothing like a sudden inspiration, as they say! It is mine, mine!"

He went back to the school-house in an entirely satisfied frame of mind, and when his mother turned her anxious face toward him, he returned the look with the greatest composure.

"Tim has got something," thought Mrs. Shattuck. "I can tell what every look means."

The meeting was opened by the president in due form. He made a very imposing appearance. His fine figure was arrayed in a new and stylish suit of broadcloth. He wore a white vest, and a bouquet bloomed out of one of his button-holes. People smiled and yet were pleased to see a young man of their town giving such a fine figure-head to the society.

"Guess," said Uncle Ben to a neighbor, "they don't do things up in style like Barkton, anywhere round here. Got a nice platform, too, havn't we?"

"Yes," said his neighbor.

The first person to open the discussion was Billy Jones, and he took the affirmative side, showing that total abstinence was the proper course to pursue, that the use of an intoxicating beverage was likely to pass beyond the control of the user, that to abstain entirely was the safer way. He then showed as facts the evil influences of the liquor-habit in society, that in the sphere of money and morals, liquor-drinking was destructive. He showed how close the connection was between the rum-shop on the one hand, and the idiot asylum, insane asylum, prison and poor-house on the other hand. It was a simple, sensible statement and the great body of his auditors showed that they were on Billy's side. Billy preferred to speak from the floor, but the president took a series of consequential strides toward the platform, and stepped upon it fearlessly, at the same time favoring the audience with a patronizing bow. The moment he occupied the platform, Tim saw its floor sway, and in alarm he said to himself, "Oh, that joist—I forgot! my! What if it should give way!"

The platform seemed though to give no sign of immediate collapse, and the president

walked it with impunity. Tim's thoughts returned therefore to that pretty new moon which he expected would render him important service in his oration. True had practised his speech carefully before a looking glass. Everything was duly arranged. His thoughts were packed away as neatly as arrows in a quiver. There was some friction though at the start.

"Mr. President," he began to say. Then he remembered that the person presiding was Will Fairfax, the secretary, who had been called for a few minutes to the chair.

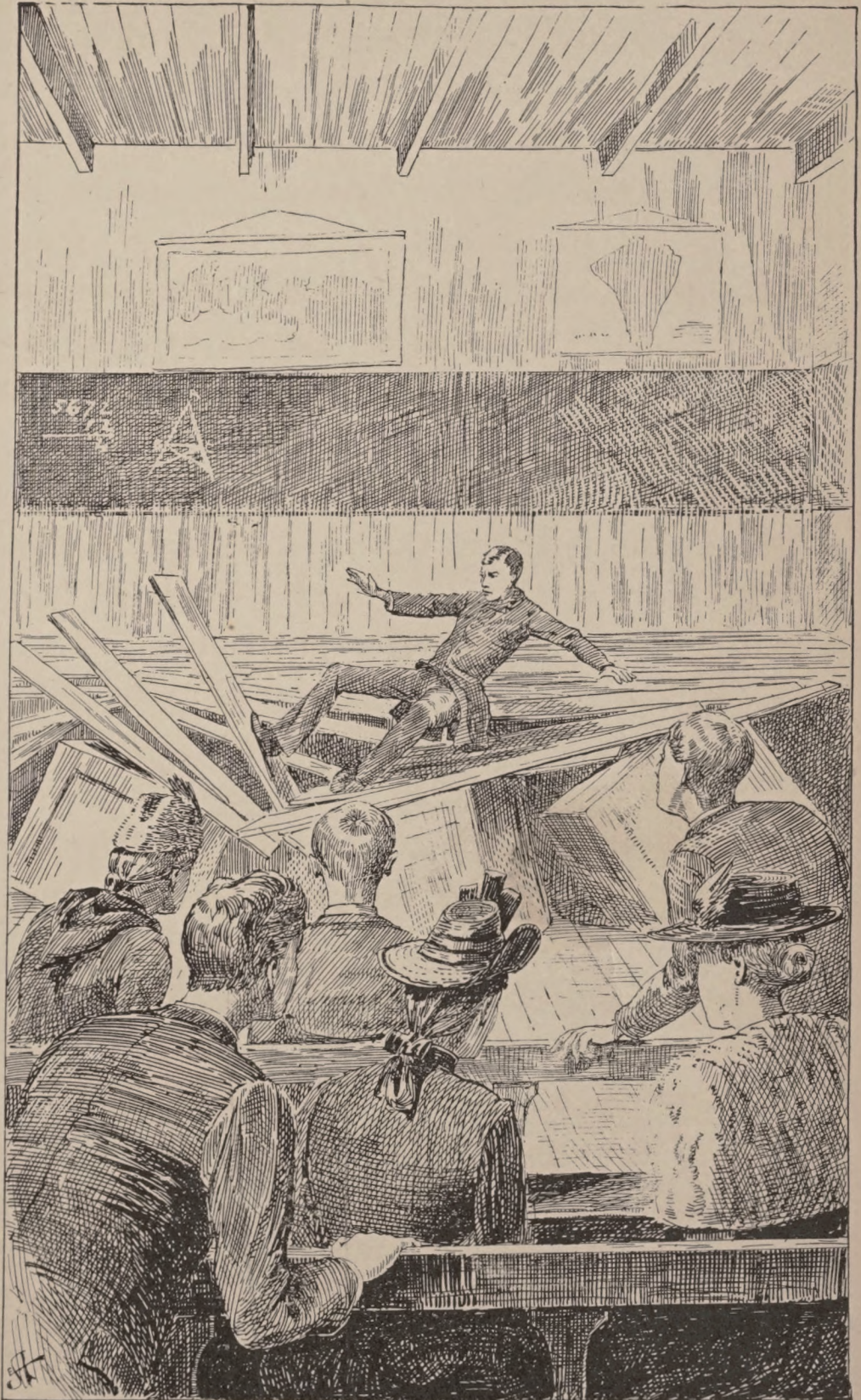
"Mr. Secre——"

He stopped and began again—

"Mr. Chairman!"

The people now were smiling, and instead of the title "Ladies and Gentlemen" which he had designed for them, he came abruptly down in his confusion to "Feller-Citizens."

However, he did not betray any outward embarrassment, and his audience were pleased to see how gracefully and promptly he went from point to point. It was a plea for and justification of moderation in drinking. Billy Jones though had covered all his points, giving one answer which I have not mentioned. Said Billy, in his every-day way, "The man



"HE FINISHED THE SENTENCE IN THE MIDST OF A CRASHING COLLAPSE."

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who drinks a little, by his example is helping another man drink a good deal."

The platform still held, and held so well, though bending and swaying, that Tim forgot how insecure it really was. Platforms will stand all that can reasonably be expected of them, but there is a point beyond which even a platform will rebel. True had so enlisted the attention of the audience that he was stimulated to do his very best. He had thought of two ways in which to close, and concluded he would take the more impassioned. He had been claiming his rights as a freeman to drink or not.

"Here I take my stand," he shouted, "on this platform of private rights"—True stamping and the platform quivering frightfully—"and here I float my banner"—rushing about as if to grasp and wave an imaginary flag, the platform badly swaying—"and if defeated, we will go down"—he almost jumped upon the platform—"down—togeth—er."

He finished the sentence in the midst of a crashing collapse, for the platform had accepted what sounded like a challenge, and brought down True and his flag. The people roared with laughter, and what added to the confusion was the attempt of a boy in the rear

of the school room to perform the part assigned him by True.

"I shall say something about a flag,—I don't know now just what—but you will hear me speak about a flag," True had said to him in private. "You take these flowers—I have bunched them up—and start down the aisle: and throw the bouquet at me. Do it as I say, but don't tell anybody I asked you, and here is some money for you."

The boy was faithful. When that peroration about the flag began, the flower-bearer advanced. He stepped down the aisle and threw his testimonial. It arrived as True was tumbling, and hit him on the nose!

The audience was again roaring. Will and two or three others rushed forward to help True up, but he was nimble and was at once on his feet again.

"Oh, mother!" said May afterwards, "did you see the snakes and sparks rush out of True Winthrop's eyes?"

"No, May, for I saw something going into them, all that handful of flowers Lemuel Adams' boy brought up."

At first, True was very wrathful, but some one called out, "Three cheers for the orator,"

and this tribute from the public restored his temper to its equilibrium. He tried to smile, and cried, "my flag still waves!"

The audience clapped this effort to take the accident with equanimity, and True now bowed very profoundly. It was the next orator's turn to try his luck, and this next orator quickly drew the attention of everybody to himself.

"Oh dear, May!" whispered Mrs. Shattuck, "there goes Tim! I wonder if he is prepared!"

"He looks triumphant, mother!"

He did look triumphant. At the time, the rupture of the platform disconcerted him, for as True went down, Tim in his excitement actually rose up. True's skilful extrication of himself from all embarrassment, and the good humor of the audience, had put Timothy Shattuck at ease once more and he stood up to address the crowd, his face beaming. Though he had not been thinking of his speech, he was not at all worried. He did not believe in worrying. As for his speech, it was only an easy matter about the moon shining down, and a thrifty farm, and a canning factory, and so on, and so on. It was all right. Everything was ready. "Sudden inspiration"

would carry him far beyond the success of all those orators who distress themselves with their preparations day after day. Tim turned his "beaming face" toward the crowd, only to see faces, faces, faces, on every side, a big heap of them, all turned toward him, all smiling, all waiting to hear—what? In that moment, every thought that Tim ever had or hoped to have, seemed to leave him! His head was as empty as a scooped out pumpkin. What he was there for, he could not possibly say. Everything had gone from his head, and there was left on his face a most vacant smile. The people smiled in return. Then they giggled; Tim giggled. He tried to think what he was there for. He could not seem to rake out of his brain the smallest idea of his mission, whether it might be temperance, kindness to animals, or Mormonism. The situation now had become very embarrassing. Tim was ready to clutch at anything that would give him the least possible help. Suddenly, looking out of a window near him, he chanced to see the young moon peacefully curving its scimitar of silver in the sky.

"All right now!" thought Tim.

"Behold that moon!" he shouted, and with his right arm gave a frantic lunge at the win-

dow. People ceased to laugh and looked at the window.

“What next!” thought Tim. He could only think of one thing, on all the earth, under all the sky, just this one thing which he now shouted, “And that canning factory!” lunging at another window. Every other idea forsook Tim as hopelessly as trade quits the man that has one day nothing to sell. People were now laughing again. Tim tried to laugh for he had nothing else to do. His head began to swim. He grasped at a bench near him and—sat down ingloriously. The temperance cause seemed now in a sorry state. People were laughing and talking. True looked happy. He reached out his hand to Will Fairfax and Will shook it.

“Perhaps, we had better adjourn,” called out the president. He saw, though, three very earnest faces in the audience, the faces of girls, and one of them, Arvie Estey, was rising as if to come and speak to him.

“Oh!” said True. “Some of our friends wish to sing a song, they told me.”

The audience received the announcement of the singing with pleasure. Tim looked relieved. He was ready to welcome anything, an earthquake, a tornado, a flood, and the

sooner and the bigger, the better. Arvie, May and Dot came forward to an old melodeon used in the exercises of the school. They had made thorough preparation for this song, keeping it a secret from everybody save the president, to whom they had communicated their wish. Dot carried the air, Arvie the tenor, and May the alto. Borrowing the key of the school-house they had stolen into the old building, and around the melodeon had sung this declaration of temperance sentiment. They were now about to reap the result of a careful preparation. Dot sat down to the instrument, and her companions stood at her side. The name of the song was "My Right." The idea was this, that we have no right in our words or deeds, to attempt anything that will in any way interfere with the welfare of another, and what an interference with the peace and prosperity of society is the habit of the liquor drinker! The chorus ran thus:

" You talk of right,
You talk of right, my brother,
You have no right to say or do,
Whate'er may harm another."

This last stanza was sung triumphantly by the trio:

“God speed the day when round the world,
All men shall be as brothers,
The Golden Rule their daily guide,
Their aim to live for others.”

The song was a complete answer to True Winthrop's rhetorical flourish of a flag of Rights. It was a surprise to him. He had said to himself,

“Those girls want to sing about something or other—I don't know what—moon, I guess, or sunsets.”

As their singing proceeded, his countenance darkened. Every verse was a push against him, forcing him into a smaller and smaller corner, and the president felt at last that he was effectually pinned and was made a mark for the criticism of others.

In no good humor, he abruptly closed the meeting, not allowing it, as generally done, an opportunity to express its opinion upon the merits of the discussion or the subject. The temperance people though did not care. They were enthusiastic in their approbation. When True in disgust had retired, taking Will Fairfax with him, others remained, and gathering about the singers, asked them to repeat the piece. The music was easily learned, and

soon the audience was repeating the chorus enthusiastically :

“ You talk of right,
You talk of right, my brother,
You have no right to say or do,
Whate'er may harm another.”

The influence of the meeting outlived that evening. It was felt all through the town and gave important aid to a movement that effectually closed all drinking places. The three girls who had so powerfully helped in the victory of the evening, went home together. They were chatting blithely when Dot exclaimed, “ There ! ” and stopped in the road.

“ What is it, Dot ? ” asked May.

“ I forgot about Will, May.”

“ I should think he might take care of himself.”

“ But I don't like that True Winthrop, and I am afraid Will has got into his clutches.”

“ None of us like him,” said Arvie.

Something like a sigh escaped from Dot, and then she moved on.

“ You going to sit up forever ? ” Arvie said to her room-mate when they were at home. Arvie noticed that Dot seemed to be in no mood for retiring.

"I must sit up awhile."

Her companion fell asleep, but Dot sat alone in the dark. She carefully listened to every sound about the house. She heard Mr. Shattuck as he came to the front door and locked it, supposing that everybody was in. She caught the sound of the wind as it teased and stirred the trees before the house. A wagon went slowly by, the clatter of its wheels harshly grating on the ear. Then Dot caught the sound of irregular, uncertain steps down in the graveled walk leading to the front door. She stole softly out of the room, went downstairs on tiptoe, and opened the front door. Some one was sitting on the stone step. Dot bent down to him, laid her hand on his shoulder, and whispered, "Will!"

"Oh, you there, Dot?" he answered. "Well, I'll think—about it—about coming in, you know."

His tones were thick, not that clear, distinct, melodious articulation which people generally noticed in the voice of Will Fairfax.

"Will, you must come in now." She spoke imperatively and he obeyed.

"Oh, little gal, you—you are hard on a feller."

"This way, Will," said Dot, steadying him

through the entry into his room, and leaving him on his bed. Then she closed the front door and went upstairs to kneel by the window and bow her hot, throbbing forehead against the cool panes. Her brother had come home intoxicated, and knowing the family sin, she was bowed all the lower by the knowledge of his shame.

Will and Dorothy Fairfax were the only children of Charles Fairfax. When their mother died, she left to her husband as a sacred legacy the possession and care of these two children. They were in age only a year apart. Will was now eighteen and Dot seventeen. Charles Fairfax had once been a man of fortune. The passion for drink had been a fire consuming health, property and his good name. The last two years of his life, Will had been kept at school by a relative now dead, and consequently had seen little of his father's sin and disgrace. Dot knew about it, and alone tried to meet and resist the awful fire burning up her father's hopes and resources. It was she who to the last clung to her father, and when he was dead she persisted in toiling heroically that a stone might mark the grave to which the life of Charles Fairfax could not bring honor.

She was a stronger character than her brother Will. Apparently she was weaker. She was slight in stature. Her face had a look that seemed a petition for sympathy. She understood Will better than he understood Dot. She appreciated the fact that it was agreeable to his pride if she seemed to lean on him, and then it kept up in her thoughts the old traditional idea of a brother's protection, which in this case was mostly a fiction and yet agreeable to her who had found the world more ready to refuse than to give shelter. In reality, the sister was the stronger, and the brother leaned on the strength that he flattered himself he was upholding. When Will went to Barkton, Dot was pleased with his course, but subsequently she was alarmed. A friend of the family chanced to visit Barkton on business, and Dot commissioned him to learn of Will's circumstances and ascertain his success. Dot was glad to hear of the popularity in Barkton that Will enjoyed, and yet when this friend mentioned the meeting with one True Winthrop in Will's company, she was startled at the sound of that name though she could not recall any reason for alarm.

"True Winthrop!" she said to herself.

"Where have I met such a man? Oh, I have it now."

She asked for a description of True, and she received it.

"That," she thought, "is not unlike the looks of the man I have in mind."

Dot had reference to a fact which showed how much she would venture to do for her father. When the depths of his shame seemed to be sinking lower and lower, one wild, stormy night, veiling her face, she went to a bar-room that he frequented, and with the bartender, pleaded that he would not sell her father liquor. He dismissed her plea with some slighting remark, and how she wished she could have easily dismissed from her mind the recollection of his features. Again and again, she saw the evil sneer flashing out of his eyes. This reception that was given to her plea, was all the stranger because the bartender was so young, and one would not associate with his years any hardened persistence in wrong. When she was turning away from the bar, some one addressed the bartender, and what was the name he used?

"It seems to me that the name was True Winthrop," Dot said to herself when that friend, commissioned to see Will at Barkton,

had brought with him the name of Will's most trusted acquaintance.

The bartender though wore a mustache and thin, black whiskers ; neither was worn by the "True Winthrop" at Barkton. She could not free herself from the suspicion in spite of this difference, that the two young men might be the same person. She longed for an opportunity to go to Barkton and learn for herself if her fears were grounded in facts. When thrown out of employment, she came at once to Barkton, though Will Fairfax little suspected the real reason of her coming. When she saw True Winthrop, she said, "He looks something like the bartender," and yet this smooth-faced young fellow, at work on innocent cans in the factory, did not fully resemble that peddler of poisons amid the glass-ware of the showy bar. Suspicions that here was an old enemy, would cling to her, but she could prove nothing.

"We don't like each other any way," concluded Dot, and this opinion was correct.

The night of the debate all doubt of True's personality vanished.

"Why didn't I think of it before?" she said to herself as she watched him during the debates. "That bartender, like True, wore a

white vest, and he had on a black coat, and he had a bouquet in his button-hole."

Yes, when he spoke and made certain gestures, she saw again the youthful bartender pouring liquor from one glass into another, and then, in a sneer on the speaker's face, she saw the same contempt with which her prayer in behalf of her father had been recklessly dismissed.

"No doubt of it," said Dot. Before she reached Mrs. Shattuck's the night of the debate, she had met one of the young people of the neighborhood who spoke of True and Will as seen entering the tavern together.

When she admitted Will to the house and saw that he was intoxicated, she knew that True had exerted for ill his influence over Will, and it seemed to Dot as if her prayer had once more been refused by True, and in the person of his son, the father had again been poisoned by that young liquor vender. What a black night that was when Dot still lingered at the window, bowing her head against the panes! The misty clouds seemed to have quenched the light of the stars. A hoarse wind murmured its threats of storm. Dot thought of Arvie who had knelt at the bed-side before she retired.

“I wish I could pray,” said the girl softly, the convulsive sobs choking her voice. Her soul seemed as lonely as the summit of Barkton’s big mountain, around which the storm-clouds were rushing, gathering forces that would be big enough to sweep the valleys and drench them with the clattering rain. Already, the storm seemed to have descended and to be raging through the soul of the watcher. Sometime before the morning, worn out, exhausted, she crept to her bed and sank into a vexed, uneasy sleep.

CHAPTER XIV.

CORNER WORK.

A TRIM, white sweeping-cap framing her pretty face, a broom in her hands, May Shattuck was vigorously stirring the dust out of the carpet of the room that the family used as parlor and a sitting apartment also.

“Here is one of your corners, mother, and I suppose you want that cleaned out thoroughly.”

“You suppose, May? You ought to know by this time. I don’t have any faith in people who at every chance slight corners and only sweep where it can be seen. I approve of putting your broom into the little as well as big places, and cleaning them out thoroughly.”

“Pay attention to your corner, that is your motto then, mother.”

“That is my motto. Our corner in life may be small, but we can do our duty in it.”

May’s broom came to a rest. “My corner,

mother, does seem small ; just a bench in a canning factory."

" Might be smaller, daughter."

" Well, mother guess what we girls are thinking of ? "

" What girls ? "

" Dot, and Arvie, and the sweeper ? "

" I couldn't say."

" We want to make our corner bigger. We are not contented to do what we are doing. Now you may laugh, but I would like to be a teacher."

May eyed her mother sharply. She knew how very practical Mrs. Shattuck was, and thought she might classify these dreams as visionary. Mrs. Shattuck though had exalted ideas of her daughter's capabilities, and was ready to endorse May's projects.

" I have thought the same thing. Don't you remember, May, when you were a little girl, how you used to get the tots of the neighborhood together and teach them ? Playing school, you called it."

" Havn't you forgotten that, mother ? " replied May eagerly, her cheeks flushed with a pleasurable excitement.

" Oh no. I have often thought you would

make a good teacher, but the way has never seemed to open."

"Perhaps it is opening now."

"How?"

"Well, we girls have been talking it over. Dot thinks she would like to make a teacher, and so would I, and Arvie thinks if she could write a nice hand, and understood book-keeping and was quick at figures, she could get her living as a book-keeper, in some counting-room you know."

"But that don't answer my question 'how.'"

"No, that is true. The thing is the way to do it. I will tell you what I thought of."

While May eagerly detailed her plans, Mrs. Shattuck carefully, sympathetically listened. When no longer young, when budding-time in our garden of hope is past, it is our privilege to listen to the plans of those still young and help develop them. Who can say? It may be, that larger will be the result when we advance the plans of another than if we had moved forward our own. Did that sagacious mother, Mrs. Shattuck, have any such idea? May continued:

"You know, mother, that Mr. Eastburn is teaching our school, this winter—James Eastburn. Tim says he is a brother of the Mr.

Eastburn he used to go to school to. Tom Parlin and Dave Flitner were among his boys. Now we girls have an idea that our Mr. Eastburn would keep an evening school—we would pay him you know—and that would give us girls a chance to start anew in our studies. Don't you see?"

"I do, and I think it would be an excellent plan."

"Oh thank you, mother, and you speak to father?"

"You do it. Folks like to have a thing come to them first hand."

"I will, I will."

"Now I want to ask you about one of those girls who want to enlarge the corner they are in. I want to ask you about Dot. You know when you had that debate on temperance in the school-house, how worried she was about Will?"

"Yes, mother."

"You know she talked with Will and he said he would try to do better?"

"I know it."

"Do you think there has been any trouble since? It was bad enough then."

"I can't say how it is. That Dot! You would think she was like a branch of willow

that will bend any way you please, but I guess Will Fairfax has found there is a lot of oak in her. Why, mother, she is a little giantess, and if she does carry out her plans, she will make a stir."

The plans of all three of these young ladies were carried out as far as the evening school went. Mr. James Eastburn was induced to open the school and there was an encouraging attendance. Dot and May studied that they might one day be teachers, and Arvie tried to perfect herself in penmanship and accounts. True Winthrop sneered at the school as a woman's movement, and Will Fairfax did not have independence enough to differ. Billy Jones felt his deficiencies so much that he entered the school. Tim Shattuck—was in a quandary. His mother questioned him on the subject of the school.

"Tim, why don't you go to Mr. Eastburn's school?"

"Oh mother, I don't know. I have been thinking on the subject."

"It is a good opportunity to go farther in your studies. Chances like this in Barkton don't come every day."

"I know it, but I guess they will come some other day. Time enough."

"Tim, have you really, seriously thought what you are going to do in life? Just now, you are in a canning factory, putting up vegetables and fruits, but you don't expect to follow it for a living. It is good enough as far as it goes, though I would do better if I could."

"Have I thought, mother? Can't help thinking where an enterprising woman like you is around. Yes, I have thought a good deal. Sometime, I think I would like a trade or to be in business or to farm—no, I don't just like that. Canning is a trade, mother, and I can stick to that."

"But if you can do better, you want to, don't you?"

"Yes, I think I would like to."

"Well, Tim, there is nothing like education. Your father and mother wish they had more of it, and I would improve every chance. That's my idea."

"Good idea, good idea, but still I don't want to make a big fuss over it."

"Fuss? We must do something. Boats that drift with the current, will get carried out to sea. If you don't look out, you will find your opportunities going behind you, and you can't pick them up again. Now I would go to this

evening school. That will be something in itself and may suggest something else by-and-by."

"Oh mother, you do so drive folks," replied Tim in his easy way. "I dont want to fret. It will come out right, by-and-by. Time enough!"

As if sorry he had not promised to heed his mother's advice, he called out when she was passing from the kitchen where this conversation had taken place, "I will think about what you say, mother."

He did think, and kept thinking, thinking, thinking, and the young man who did it, failed to remember that one might "keep thinking" and yet be a "do nothing." In other words, there might be such a thing as being "too late for the tide-mill."

CHAPTER XV.

A SERIOUS CRISIS.

EDWARD EASTBURN'S scholars remembered that with his instructions went a very positive religious influence. The same feature marked the school taught by his brother, James. In other things, the two were indeed two. Edward was slight; James had a fine figure and in his very person made a deep impression on a school. Edward's eyes were of a dark blue; James' were hazel, sparkling with a vivid light, and his black hair, a jet black, curled in many little folds. He was reputed to be "the handsomest man that ever taught our school." His brother Edward, at the very start, was obliged to prove that he was master, and prove it he did. There was not the least questioning of James' authority.

"He was master the moment he crossed the threshold," declared Uncle Ben Bowler, "and the scholars all knowed it."

James Eastburn was still a student in

college, fighting his way against board bills and tuition bills, and a chance to teach gave him very acceptable ammunition in that fight which poor students must make. The evening school was welcomed as another opportunity to strengthen himself pecuniarily. The same direct spiritual influence that made an atmosphere in his day-school, affecting the thoughts and life of his pupils, was felt also by those who came to him in the evening.

The rector of St. Mary's, Barkton, at that time the Rev. Charles Ellis, heard about the spiritual aspect of Mr. Eastburn's work. Mr. Ellis knew that the inhabitants of this school-district were not very successful in conquering the long walk between their homes and the church, and he said, "The church shall go to them. I will have services in the school-house some of the nights when no evening school is there."

He accordingly made an appointment for services at the school-house. Mr. Eastburn's influence upon the school, exerted in his quiet way, was like that of the warm spring rain upon the frozen soil, making it ready for the farmer's plow.

"I'll put in the plow the very first meeting we have," Mr. Ellis said to one of his wardens

who accompanied him to the school-house. The sermon-plow was that old and effective one labeled Immediate Repentance, used by such master-husbandmen as St. John Baptist and St. Paul.

Among those listening to this sermon, were Arvie, Dot and May. Tim intended to be there, but his good intention did not take him there. Good intentions may prove to be the slowest of slow wheels to travel on. Will Fairfax was also absent. True Winthrop attended this service, but it was the only time he was present. He went as a spy, to see who might attend, not as a learner to be instructed. The seats of the school-house were all filled, for the service was a novelty. The impression made on the meeting was deep and serious.

“There is feeling,” thought the clergyman, “and I will test it.”

He said aloud, “I should be glad to meet for private conversation any who might like to stop when the congregation has been dismissed.”

The congregation rose and promptly moved out, all excepting Arvie, May and Dot. These three now rose up. Arvie looked perplexed.

"Don't you want to stop, girls?" whispered Arvie, sitting down very decidedly.

May shook her head and passed out of the room.

"You will, Dot?"

Dot looked down and then looked up, her eyes swimming in tears. She was affected, but she shook her head and moved away.

"Shall I stay?" wondered Arvie. All alone, would she remain for conversation? A peculiar sense of isolation burdened her. She felt that people would point their remarks at her, and indeed it almost seemed as if moving away from the school-house, they now turned to look back through the darkness and through the very walls of the building, and saw her and commented upon the act. If she lingered, she would meet criticism in after days. True Winthrop, whose sharp, prying eyes she saw at the meeting, would be sure to make some sarcastic reference to the step. But if, on the other hand, she went out, she felt that she would carry with her a burdening consciousness of cowardice. It would seem like a retreat from duty. Then it might help somebody else to linger another time, if she stopped to-night. She felt these reasons so forcibly

that she reached down her hand to the seat she occupied, and gripped it.

"I will hold on!" she murmured. "I must not go."

More and more did she feel that she was stopping for others as well as herself, so that when the clergyman approached, and said he was glad to see her and inquired her name, she was prompted to say "Dot Fairfax," or "May Shattuck," as well as "Arvie Estey." After her answer, Mr. Ellis kindly counseled her, and then she went out into the night.

"That was an interesting case," said Mr. Ellis to Mr. Eastburn when they were standing before the school-house door, the lights having been extinguished, the building closed, and the clergyman ready to mount his carriage and ride off with his warden. "Do you know that young woman who stopped?"

"I do know her. I was standing near the door when she came out just now, and I saw that it was one of my evening scholars, Arvie Estey."

"I have seen her face at St. Mary's, and she has been a good listener, but I never met her personally. A very interesting case. She says she met with an accident some time ago and lost an arm and it set her to thinking

seriously and she used this expression—it touched me to see how she put it, hanging down her head, and speaking in a humble, sincere way—‘I wanted help, and I knew I wasn’t worthy of it. I knew I had neglected God, but then I knew Christ died for me, and I thought of Him. He seemed to be very near, and I thought, though I only had one hand to give Him—and not two—why He would take the one, if it was all I had, you know—and—I think He took it and He hasn’t let go since and I don’t believe He will ever.’ That was touching, wasn’t it? I encouraged her to make her consecration to the Saviour as complete as possible, to think of Him more, trust Him more, pray to Him more, and do all she could for Him, and take a stand openly in His church. I took it for granted that she had friends she could influence—I saw May Shattuck with her and a dark-eyed girl too who has been over at church—and I tried to make it plain that the best way to help ourselves was to forget ourselves and go and help somebody else. I think, Mr. Eastburn, you have quite a responsibility here.”

“I hope I have, sir, if God will give me strength to meet it, and I don’t think He will fail me,” replied the teacher,

"I feel encouraged, Mr. Eastburn, after talking with this girl to come again, and I will let you know when. Good-night." The rector and his warden drove off into the night.

When Arvie went home, she was surprised to see Mrs. Shattuck in the sitting-room. If the girls chanced ever to be out and if it were past Mrs. Shattuck's usual retiring-hour, on their return they would be likely to find an empty sitting-room, but Mrs. Shattuck would leave a lamp behind her to welcome them. To-night, the lamp and its mistress also were there, and was that an open Bible near Mrs. Shattuck?

"I wonder," thought Arvie, "if Mrs. Shattuck feels interested in the school-house meetings. I would like to ask her."

Mrs. Shattuck, though, did not encourage Arvie to ask any questions. Her manner was reserved. She almost told Arvie that she did not feel like talking. Arvie was disappointed, and she quickly went upstairs. If she had heard a brief conversation between Mrs. Shattuck and May when the latter came from the school-house, she might have felt differently.

"Did you have a good meeting?" asked Mrs. Shattuck.

"Yes, very—good," replied May rather stiffly.

"Well, what was done?"

"Oh, Mr. Ellis preached."

"Did he preach a good sermon?"

"Q-q-quite."

"Where is Arvie?"

"She stopped after the meeting."

"Stopped?"

"Yes, he asked—"

"Who asked?"

"Why, Mr. Ellis. He asked anybody to stop who wanted to-to-talk with him."

"And Arvie stopped?"

"Yes, mother."

"I suppose there were others."

"No, mother."

To May's surprise, her mother remarked, "Why didn't you stop?"

"I didn't—want to."

"What did mother say that for?" wondered May as she went to her room. She was disappointed because her mother had not approved of her course. Arvie has already been reported as disappointed because Mrs. Shattuck had said so little, while May felt that she had said too much. Dot too was dissatisfied, because she had left Arvie alone at the after meeting.

Mrs. Shattuck—if the others only knew it—was much dissatisfied with herself. Her conscience had been uneasy a long time.

Of these four disquieted souls, only one treated her dissatisfaction aright. Arvie took her disappointment to God. She asked Him to reach and affect and make anew the heart of Mrs. Shattuck, to influence the lives of all about her, and most of all her own needy nature. When down upon the unrest of our souls, upon its confusing fears, upon the commotion of its uncertain efforts to be better and its dissatisfaction because we are still so lacking, the Spirit of God descends and there abides, that must result which followed the brooding of the Mighty Spirit upon the waters of chaos. Lo, a new creation! Peace in the place of unrest; the beauty of a new world of holiness instead of the deformity of sin; and what wonder if in the Eden of its joy, the soul rejoices and sings before the Creator who communes with it?

CHAPTER XVI.

OPPOSITION.

“**I** WONDER what this is,” thought Will Fairfax.

He was handling a book up in the Shattuck garret. A severe cold had kept him in doors for two days, and this third day he had hoped to resume his work in the counting-room. Dull, heavy snow-clouds muffling the top of Moose Mountain had descended, coming closer and closer to the houses and barns of Barkton, and now were trying to smother them under snow-flakes.

“You must not go out to-day,” said Mrs. Shattuck with mother-like authority.

“I am willing to stay,” replied Will, “if I can keep occupied.”

He remembered that he had seen a pile of old volumes up in the garret, when stowing his trunk there one day, and he climbed again the dusty stairway in search of literary treasures. There in the garret, he dropped upon the floor,

and in his interested hunt soon ceased to hear the driving of the storm against the low attic-windows.

"Wonder what this is!" he said again. "Some kind of a history of—America. Has some pictures. Looks interesting. Guess I will take it down-stairs."

He carried the book down to his room and then seated himself before a snappy, roaring fire on the wide hearth.

"What are you up to, Will? Did you say come in?" cried a voice, and at the same time the door closed upon a caller whose knock Will had not noticed.

"Ho, that you, Tim Shattuck? Beg pardon for not answering your knock. Welcome, and take a chair by the fire. Just the day for an open fire, isn't it?"

"Reading a book, Sir William?"

"Yes, went mousing round up garret, and found this. One of your histories, learned young man."

"One of mine? See here! If that isn't a borrowed book, one I forgot all about!"

"Whose is it?"

"That belongs to the Jones family. Been up garret, I don't—know—how—long. I must return that when you get through. No

hurry. That book I took from an old mill—a curious place.”

Knock—knock—knock !

Somebody had opened the front door and then rapped smartly on the door of Will's room.

“Come in !” shouted Will.

The door opened, and in walked True Winthrop.

“How are you, Will,—Tim ?” said True.

“Snowy, isn't it ? What are you doing ? Ah, reading ! No work in my room at the factory and I am browsing round,” he added.

Here, True's evil eyes wandered about the room, sharply looking at object after object, as if a vulture hoping to find carrion. He found nothing to interest him until he came to the book in Will's hands.

“What have you got there ?”

“Oh, a history I found up garret,” replied Will.

“I was just telling Will where I found that,” remarked Tim. “It was in a mill down in Seaton, an old black tide-mill, where you'll find a hundred rats to every meal-bag.”

“Encouraging outlook for the miller !” said True. “Good place to camp out in, that

neighborhood? I want to take this young man somewhere for his health, next summer."

As True spoke, he laid his hand on Will, and his black eyes glistened as if they belonged to one of the hundred rats Tim had told about, and as if Will were the meal-bag. Tim did not like True well enough to give an opinion about the neighborhood of the old mill for camping-out purposes, when any tent would be a kind of box to imprison Will Fairfax. True now changed the subject of conversation.

"Look here, boys, don't you think we are dreadful dull round this way?"

"How so?" inquired Tim.

"Why nothing seems to flourish except those meetings in the school-house, and they are just stupid. Let's have something else."

"What else?" asked Will.

"Oh, may be something literary. At any rate, something interesting. Haven't they ever had any young people's societies or clubs here, Tim?"

"Sometimes. There, that makes me think of one society we boys had. Mr. Eastburn's brother taught school here. He met with us. We called it the 'Round-about-Home Soci-

ety.' The idea was to take up subjects of study right at home,—what might grow in our fields, what might be there as rocks, in fact anything, birds or animals, or what may have happened in history, though Barkton never did make much stir in the world."

"Let Barkton make a stir now!" said True with an important air. "Let's get up another Round-about-Home Society and wake 'em up, all through this region. Have it literary, you know, somewhat social, of course, but the idea is to give Barkton's young minds something to think about. What say, Will? Come, you and Tim can furnish the intellect and I'll furnish—"

"The brass!" thought Tim.

"The money," cried True. "Come! Shall we have the society? We will see about the money."

Tim always averse to an immediate decision said, "I will think about it."

Will cried, "I will join your society of one, and is there any salaried office you may have to give?"

"Salary!" said True, sending an avaricious look around the room. "Money to come in is what I am after, not money to pay out."

Tim in after-days recalled this remark by

True, though he did not regard it as significant at the time.

"Well, boys, we will have a second edition of the 'Round-about-Home Society' and start it at once," said True. "We will meet in the parlor of the tavern, for I can engage that, and let me see! Say, on Monday night!"

"Monday?" asked Will. "Don't believe I can come Monday."

"Why not?"

"I may have an engagement."

"*May* have! *Have* one with me and decide it."

"Can't, True, and the fact is when I come to think it over, I don't know as I can join at all. However, I will see and let you know."

"I can't let you off. You said you would join, you know, and this society is one of those peculiar organizations whose doors open in and not out when you have promised."

"Once in, you can't get out—ha-ha! We will see then. I am not in yet."

"Nor I," thought Tim, glancing at True's hand resting on Will like the claw of an evil beast fastening on its victim.

"I shall expect you both," asserted True. "However, I must go now. Tim, are not you

going down street? I would like some company. Come. Put your coat on."

"Oh, there!" exclaimed Tim. "I told my mother an hour ago I would go down to the grocer's, and I will hurry off with you, True."

The two went out into the storm together, and as they buffeted it, True asked many questions about the neighborhood of the old tide-mill at Seaton.

"I have quite a scheme for camping out," explained True, "next summer, you see, and that old tide-mill somehow takes my fancy."

"You can't camp out in that, True."

"Ha-ha! it would make a good place to retreat to, if it should storm."

"Yes, you could do that. One might hide away in some of its old lofts and never be found out."

"Good place then to hide in!" said True, turning his watchful, black eyes on Tim. "One might perhaps take provisions for a week and be snug as could be under its roof. Plenty of water there?"

"Such as it is, salt you know. But there! come to think of it, right at one side of the mill is a spring of the sweetest, coolest water in the world."

"I see, Tim, the best neighborhood in the world for camping out. The whole ocean before you, and behind you a spring of water, and an old mill close at hand where you can retreat and stay a week in one of its dark corners and nobody knows you are there. Just the place!"

At the grocery, Tim and True separated.

Will Fairfax in his room, was still reading, apparently, but he could not confine his thoughts to his book. He laid it down and watched the fire, its big wings of yellow forever beating upward into the dark chimney and yet never fully escaping from the broad, black hearth. Tired of this, he turned to the windows, against which the wind was driving the snow. He watched awhile the eddying rush of white flakes, and then he turned back to the fire again.

"Don't see what is the matter with me!" he thought. "Can't seem to tie my mind down to anything."

He now rose up and walked the room. Will Fairfax was uneasy, just as many people are uneasy in times of religious quickening. He had not attended the school-house services and yet he could not escape their influence. They reached him and moved him, even as

the sea affects people in some district that it never visits, and from the vision of whose inhabitants it is ever excluded. Is it without influence? By the vapors it breathes forth, the sea touches and vitally affects that inland district. From the meetings in the school-house went out a power communicated from person to person, at last affecting lives that shunned and hated those services. Will was not a hater, but he did shun the school-house. Still, he could not get away from it, and a conscience reached and stirred, Will Fairfax took about with him daily. In this storm, his agitation was unusual.

“Wind bothers me!” he said. “Don’t see why I should care about the wind! Sounds gloomy. Snow looks cold and dreary. It doesn’t trouble me generally. Don’t see what the matter is with me.”

His disquiet was occasioned by that serious, persuasive Spirit of God that will not leave the human heart to its ease selfish and sinful, but again and again disturbs it.

“I suppose I ought to be doing differently myself,” thought Will. “Ah! there is a knock at the door! Come in!” he cried.

He was glad to hear the knock; it promised a call that would divert his thoughts. He was

sorry when the door opened, to see Dot; her presence promised anything but a change of his thoughts. She had been deeply interested in striving to secure his attendance at the school-house,—far more interested than to go herself.

“If I could see Will beginning a new life, how happy I should be!” she would say to herself.

She had urged him to be present at these special services, and he had partly promised to go the ensuing Monday night.

“She has come to get me to say I will go without fail,” he concluded in his own thoughts when he saw that opening door. He was right in thus deciding.

“Oh, Will, you want a caller? I only called,” she said with an apologetic air, “just to make sure that you are going to the school-house Monday night. You know you thought you might do so.”

“Yes, I did say I might, but True Winthrop—”

“There! I might have guessed as much as that. He is always interfering.”

“Oh, hold on! What he proposes is certainly very good, a kind of improvement society, literary, you know.”

"I know what he means. I can see through his meaning. He wants to call off the attention of the young people from the meetings, and I wouldn't encourage him. I would refuse altogether."

"Tim Shattuck hasn't refused."

"He won't join True's society; you see if he does. I did want you to go with me, Will."

She left the room, a look of sorrow saddening her face,

"Dot!" called out Will. "Dot!"

She stepped back,

"What is it, Will?"

"It isn't just going to the meetings that Parson Ellis wants. He would like to have folks go farther than that. When you take your stand, I will think about taking mine."

Dot looked at him in silence, and then turned away more sorrowful still.

"There!" thought Will. "I knew I had Dot then. Folks that are anxious about others ought to do something themselves. And about going Monday night, I will see what Tim does about True's society. He is a steady chap, and if Tim says 'no,' I will say ditto."

He took up the history once more and tried to be interested in that.

Tim Shattuck had now returned from the store. In the mean time, he had left at the counting-room of the factory several pieces of mail that he found in the post-office. He was busily thinking about True's proposition as he entered the house.

"I don't feel like going into that affair," he said to himself. "I will think about it when I get into my room."

Tim's chamber was furnished with a stove, and on a cold day, a fire kindled within the stove made very agreeable music. Tim's chamber had a window also, and it looked out upon Moose Mountain's huge, shaggy form. When work in the factory was dull and Tim had leisure enough for a rest, a book, and a fire in his room, he enjoyed its seclusion very much. He now kindled a fire and sat down by the stove, not to read but think, and as between the window and Moose Mountain there was a dense, white curtain of snow-flakes, there was nothing in the prospect that threatened to interfere with his meditations.

"What shall I do about True's society?" he soliloquized. "I don't like his purpose in it. Those are good meetings at the school-house and they ought not to be interfered with, but

I don't know as I like to come down sharp on True and say 'no.'"

Of course not. It was not at all his pleasure. It was not by any means his habit to deal thus promptly with questions of duty. He was not aware how this habit of procrastination was strengthening. It grew with his years, even as the little roots grow into great ones, as the brooks swell into the rivers, as the bits of vapor accumulate into clouds and storms. He now said to himself, "I won't go into True's society, but on the other hand, I won't come down on him all at once and refuse. Maybe, once in a while, it will be policy to attend, though not to join."

Having disposed of this subject, he thrust another stick of wood into the stove and proceeded to take up and decide another subject. Tim had attended several of the school-house meetings, and they had deeply affected him. He saw his duty plainly, that he ought to put away all sin, all indifference about religious matters, all neglect of God, and promptly begin to look to God in penitence and trust, making Christ his example, his great and all-sufficient Redeemer and Friend. In His church, he ought to confess Him. What would he do? "I wish I knew what to do about it,"

he said. "I mean to think on the subject any way."

Why did he not get down upon his knees and ask God to tell him what to do? A poor helpless sinner perplexed about the way he ought to travel, why did he not look off to that Guide-board, the Cross on Calvary? That tells lost souls which way to journey, and no pilgrim uncertain about the path of duty ever made a mistake if he looked at that.

"I wish I knew what to do!" murmured Tim. A long time he sat thinking. The fire in the stove died down. The flakes without began to lose form. The meshes of this white curtain all ran into one another and became a huge confusing cloud. At last, he heard a step down-stairs, a pounding as of snowy feet on a mat in the back-entry.

"Father has come from the factory," thought Tim.

Soon he heard Mr. Shattuck's voice, "Tim!"

"I'll be down, father."

He hurried out of the room, and down-stairs, in the kitchen, he met his father.

"Well, Tim, that mail you brought from the post-office and left at the counting-room had an important order."

“Did it?”

“They want I don’t know how many canned goods packed up and sent off in five days any way. It will make me exceedingly busy, and I told the superintendent I must have help. He told me to pick my man, and I will take you if you want the job, your work being slack.”

“All right, father. I should like it much.”

Tim went upstairs again to his room.

“Fire is most out! Guess I wont stay here any longer. And that subject about the meetings?” thought Tim, moving to the window and looking out. “Stormy, isn’t it? How the wind blows! Well, I won’t let that subject go. I will keep thinking about it. I shall be pretty busy, day and evening I guess, while I have that job at the factory, and when I get through—I—will decide that other matter!”

Allowing the vast, spiritual interests of his soul to swing on that trifling hinge of a little work, a five days’ “job!” And yet the like thing is done by many people who permit a triviality to influence them in deciding the momentous question of their duty to God. Monday came, and the evening of that Monday, True expected to hold the first meeting

of his society. The same night, services had been appointed at the school-house.

"I hope you will go with me to-night," Dot had said to Will Fairfax in the afternoon.

"I will see, Dot."

After tea, True Winthrop called.

"I hope you are going, Will, to my room this evening."

"Well, I don't know, True."

"Oh come, Will. Don't be silly and go to the school-house."

"Where is Tim Shattuck?"

"I don't know I am sure. I should think you would be the one to tell that, living in the same house with him."

"Excuse me. I will be back in a moment."

Will found Tim alone in the sitting-room.

"Tim, are you going to join True's society?"

"Well, I have not refused yet," said Tim, following his purpose of politic inaction.

"Guess I won't then," replied Will.

He left the sitting-room, but returned very soon.

"Have you seen Dot?" he asked.

"No, I haven't," said Tim.

Will went to her room and as Dot was away

he left a note, saying that he did not find her there to explain matters, and would she please excuse him for not going with her that evening? He would see her and explain everything in the morning. The new "Round-about-Home Society" held its meeting at True Winthrop's room. He succeeded in attracting to it about fifteen of the young people. Its exercises reflected the tastes and opinions of its originator. As far as those exercises were "literary," True having arranged these, they abounded in irreverent allusions to the Bible and unfair criticisms of a religious life. The "social features of the evening," to use True's phraseology, occupied the most of the time and consisted of a string of silly games. Before this violent gust of diverting influences, all the serious thoughts of Will Fairfax went confusedly flying as snow-flakes before the winter wind.

With a heavy heart, Dot went to the school-house. Many were present, but she was so absorbed in her troubles that she did not notice who were there. She knew that there was singing, that there was prayer, that there was preaching, and—that she was in much trouble. She lingered with others at the after-meeting.

"Would you like to find the Saviour?" asked Mr. Ellis as he stopped at Dot's seat.

"I am in trouble," she replied, "for another. I am very anxious about my brother," she said.

"And not for yourself?"

Dot burst into tears and bowed her head upon her hands.

"Oh, yes," she said, "but I don't know. I seem to be away off from God. I know I am not right in my own heart, but I have been thinking of another and my motives seem confused. I don't know as God wants people to come that way when they are thinking about others more than themselves. My motives are all mixed up."

"They are very clear to God. He knows that you are troubled for your brother."

Dot assented, nodding her head.

"He knows too that you are somewhat interested for yourself."

"Oh, yes, sir."

"More, I think, than you imagine."

"I dare say, sir."

"You feel that you have done wrong, that you have been living away from God and trying to live without Him and you are very sorry?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"And you would like to find Him and be assured of His forgiveness and blessing, but you feel that He is far away?"

"That is it."

"But He is near, very near. He comes in the person of His dear Son, the good Shepherd of souls, and He is always hunting for the lost lamb, isn't He?"

"Yes, sir."

"And if it be a crying lamb, one that yearns for Him and mourns for Him, don't you think He is specially near? Would He go by a lost, bleating lamb?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"Cry to Him just here. Pray to Him now. Yield yourself to Him. Don't doubt in the least. Believe what He has said, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.'"

Mr. Ellis passed away, but at once returned.

"I did not wait for your answer. Will you not make the surrender now?"

"Yes, sir."

That night, not only Dot Fairfax but May Shattuck, in lowly self-distrust, in sincere penitence, in an honest surrender committed herself to that Saviour who has come from the very heart of Deity, and is infinite love as well

as infinite power and offers Himself for the salvation of a lost world.

It was not long ere Mrs. Shattuck followed the example of Dot and May.

"What made you think specially of your duty?" asked Mr. Ellis.

"Because," said Mrs. Shattuck, "I had so many young people, bright ones too, in my house, and I felt a responsibility for them and yet felt so helpless. That made me think of God as one who might help me, and when a person begins to think seriously of God, he is sure to think about himself and what he needs, and I have made up my mind I have a duty in my own case."

It made a great difference in that home when Mrs. Shattuck with her strong, impulsive nature submitted herself to Christ's gentle yoke, when she went about wearing Christ's bridle on her tongue, and in her acts showing the gentle, restraining influence of His love. She was helped by May, Dot and Arvie.

"You, with Mrs. Shattuck, expect confirmation. In Christ's dear Church, you will be active I know, doing something for Christ in trying to live for others and in trying to get others to live for Christ," Mr. Ellis had said to the three young women at Mrs. Shattuck's.

"Yes," they had all told him. "We will try," when alone they had said to one another, "to get True Winthrop's society all into the school-house."

True Winthrop knew nothing of the prayers and efforts directed against his evil plots. He did know, though, that one by one his young supporters left him, and his "Round-about-Home-Society" went out of existence like a candle expiring for the want of illuminating material. Several of his allies were won to a new life. Will Fairfax, agreeable, amiable, easily influenced, did not go so far as to begin that life, but he made a visible improvement in some of his methods and promised Dot *some time* that he would join her in her new efforts. This was not a satisfactory course in promise-making. Tim Shattuck went on intending and intending, yet never doing. When he had finished that "five days' job" at the factory, he was no nearer a decision but farther removed from it. This might have been expected. So great, so increasing is the power of procrastination, that if we neglect for a few days to pull a weed in the garden, it will be easier to dig up a new garden-bed than simply to pluck that weak weed. Somehow such neglected duties make roots very fast. We

learn very soon how easy it is to neglect them, and then are surprised to find out how hard it is to tear them up.

CHAPTER XVII.

BLOSSOMS ON AN OLD BRANCH.

AN old man stood at a fence, looking vacantly out upon the landscape and saying, "What can I do?" It was Uncle Ben Bowler. Like almost every one else in the neighborhood, he had attended the special services in the school-house and had been affected by them.

"I haven't much to give," the old man had concluded, "but if the Lord will take a mean little remnant that I am ashamed to say anything about, if he will take what is left of a life most used up, he is welcome to it."

God was pleased to take Uncle Ben's little fraction, and the old sailor led a different life ever after. Mr. Ellis tried to leave with all docile hearers these four words, "giving up, going out." He said one night, "These four words will pretty well give the measurement of our religion. Toward God, it is a 'giving up' continually, and toward others in the

Church and in the community it is or ought to be a 'going out' continually. It is a giving up in penitence, renunciation, trust. It is a going out in deeds of love and help. Four words; don't forget them, please. It is 'giving up, going out.'"

Uncle Ben Bowler looking off upon the spring landscape, upon Moose Mountain where the forest in its new foliage made terraces of green climbing the mountain-slope, thought of the clergyman's words. He felt too, the influences of the spring, when all nature spurs us to attempt some achievement.

"Now, I can see how it is about the 'giving up' to God," soliloquized the old pilgrim, "and I can see summat into the 'going out.' Of course, we can be helpful all around us. An old man though, like me, wonders what he can do. Now if people round here fished, I could make 'em a good, honest fishin' line and help things that way. Of course, I can fetch wood and water and make myself handy and help along, may be, that way. It don't seem though, as if an old branch could do much." He ended in this fashion, for just then he fastened his big, faded eyes on the branch of an old apple-tree, a branch that drooped near him.

"If that old branch ain't goin' to blossom!" said Uncle Ben, turning aside his thoughts from the subject of helpfulness. "Yes, she's agoin' to blossom, sure! Now that is encouragin'! There is an old branch and it's a-goin' to do suthin'."

The more Uncle Ben looked at this particular branch, the less despondent did he feel.

"I'm a poor old branch, but I can do some good yet," he concluded. What could he do? He thought of a project one day.

The Jones-house was a long structure, running parallel with the road; but between the road and the house was a yard that painfully needed cultivation. Weeds ragged and scrawny and prolific, would be likely to riot on every hand at a later date. Uncle Ben scratched his head and said, "I've got it! I'll turn gardener and make suthin' pretty for folks to look at, yes, for the folks to look at from the winder, and for folks to see when they are a-goin' by. I can give the children and sick folks all the posies they want. Yes, I'll have a garden."

That yard was the scene of great activity. There was digging, and there was bed-making, and there was planting. In this way, the "old branch" prepared to blossom and how

beautifully it asserted its power to do something! There was a flowering out into sweet-peas, nasturtiums, candy-tuft, phlox, marigolds and other garden-favorites. To tired eyes within, to weary hearts without, the garden was a source of unending pleasure.

"Some of Uncle Ben's flowers," as people would say, went into the hands of sick people or old pilgrims like himself, and they were like messages from God telling of His love, steadfast and beautiful even as nature's annual flowering time.

One afternoon Uncle Ben had a caller in his garden. People would sometimes step within the enclosure made so attractive and sit in what he called his "bower." Its seat was very humble, only a shoe box turned over. Its roof was a very cheap one, only poles bent into an arch for which morning-glories with their leaves plaited a covering and then hung the walls each morning with bells that swung in the wind but modestly refused to startle the world by any music. It was an unusual visitor that Uncle Ben had one day when the autumn ripeness was giving to field and forest a rare tinting.

"Uncle Ben," said a voice, "you have done a good work this summer. I have not seen

this yard looking so well—never, I can safely say.”

“Oh, thank you! Won’t you come in, Mr. Prentiss, and take a seat in my bower and rest you?”

It was the superintendent of the canning factory close at hand. He generally went whirling by in his rapid little wagon, and to walk was only occasional, while to stop and lean on anybody’s fence was a rare thing.

“Oh, come in!” Uncle Ben called again.

“Thank you. I do feel tired.”

Mr. Prentiss slowly passed into the garden as if very weary, and then entered Uncle Ben’s bower.

“Why, Skipper—” he always gave this title to the old sailor when directly addressing him and it pleased him—“you have a nice little spot here.”

“I have tried to have it, Mr. Prentiss.”

“You have succeeded.”

This testimony to the “blossoming of an old branch” was grateful to Uncle Ben.

“I s’pose, Mr. Prentiss, superintendents get tired like other folks.”

“Oh, yes, though sometimes they feel that people expect them to work and worry and

never get tired. It is the worry we feel very much."

"I dare say," said Uncle Ben in a sympathetic tone of voice. "There is a lot that comes on your shoulders."

"Yes, it not only comes on, but it is hard to get off. That though is not the worst thing. When you trust people and expect them to come up to your expectations and they do not, that is very trying."

Whom did Mr. Prentiss mean? If he had told the old man he was thinking about his nephew, it would have withered the beauty of his garden in Uncle Ben's eyes.

Uncle Ben could only say, "Yes, yes!"

There was a little period of silence in the bower, interrupted only by the musical see-sawing of a cricket, bravely trying to make the world think there would be no winter, only one glorious autumn with diamonds on all the trees—forever.

"Who are those?" asked Mr. Prentiss, looking through a loop-hole in the bower out upon the road. "Two young men. Oh, I see!"

Uncle Ben strained his feeble vision and said, "I guess they are True Winthrop and Will Fairfax a-comin' from the factory."

"Indeed! I thought they told me they wanted to go over to the cars."

"Somebody said they were a-goin' campin' out. It's rather late, seems to me. I wonder where they're goin'."

"No, I believe they have given that up," replied Mr. Prentiss, speaking slowly as if his thoughts were on something else.

"I wonder what that means," he added.

Uncle Ben could not send any ray of information into the shadows of this wonder whatever it might be. The superintendent then rose and said he must be going.

"Well, Skipper," he said cordially, holding out his hand—it was not extended to every one—"I have had a good rest though a short one. Your garden has done a good work. It sort of cheers up people and gives them something else to think of."

"Oh, thank ye. I feel paid for my work, and—and—Mr. Prentiss, you are doin' a good work, a great one I think, employin' so many people and keepin' all these homes a-goin'."

Was not that thoughtful speech a bright blossom on Uncle Ben's branch?

"Oh, thank you! That helps me a lot."

The superintendent now hastily passed out of the garden into the road, and left this "blos-

soming old branch " to its beautiful seclusion
amid morning-glories, nasturtiums, and the
larkspurs at whose sweet targets the bees
were clumsily aiming.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FIRE.

THE superintendent was thinking about the two young men whom he had seen walking in the road. He thought he had understood the coming of Will Fairfax to Barkton. He was an agreeable, good-looking young fellow out of work in the city, and chancing to see that a book-keeper was needed in Barkton, he applied for and obtained the situation. There was no mystery about this. But why should True Winthrop come to Barkton and go to work as an ordinary hand in the canning factory? Mr. Prentiss did want to ask Uncle Ben what he thought of True Winthrop. If he had put the question, Uncle Ben would have cautiously said, "I am disappointed in that young man."

He was sorely disappointed. He wanted to believe that True was the mysterious hero of his famous Seaton story, but he had abandoned that theory long ago. He had seen too

much of True's evil eye to believe that it would match the nobility of his missing hero.

Mr. Prentiss was obliged to rely on his own opinion of True Winthrop, and that left him still wondering why True came to Barkton. It did seem singular, for True was a young man of much energy, intelligence and shrewdness, and he was qualified for something far above his present position, that of a manipulator of cans in this country-factory. The mystery must be veiled a little longer. Mr. Prentiss' present perplexity concerned the strange disappearance of money from the office; and why he should connect the agency of Ben Bowler's own nephew, Billy Jones, with such disappearance might seem as unaccountable as the loss of the money through May Shattuck or Dot Fairfax or her brother. Billy among the young men was a pattern of good morals.

"Now if I should suspect Will Fairfax of it," reasoned Mr. Prentiss, "that might seem more probable, but Will was the person telling me of the loss and thieves are not apt to tell when money is missed that they have taken. Of course, they might, but it is not probable, and I can't help thinking that Billy knows about it."

The perplexity of Mr. Prentiss in Uncle

Ben's bower had followed a second announcement by the book-keeper that money, that very day, was missing from the cash drawer of the counting-room, and this time, it was about twenty dollars.

"I left it all right when I went to dinner," Will Fairfax promptly reported to Mr. Prentiss as soon as he missed it after returning, "and I don't see where it went. Drawer was locked."

"Who was in the office while you were gone?" asked Mr. Prentiss.

"Billy Jones was not in it, but you know he works in the room off the office, and you told him to look after things while I was gone. Billy says he had his eye on the office all the time and he did not see anybody come in," replied Will.

Mr. Prentiss looked about the office as if to see how a person could possibly have meddled with that locked cash-drawer and yet Billy not have seen any one. There was a window opening theoretically from the office into the factory but it was rarely opened as a fact, and Mr. Prentiss did not halt in his inspection of the room to inquire whether anybody unseen by Billy could have entered the office by way of that window.

"It could not have been Billy Jones, you think?" suggested Mr. Prentiss.

"You mean that Billy took it?" replied Will Fairfax. "I would sooner suspect myself."

"Perhaps you are the one," thought Mr. Prentiss. "If so, I never saw a better counterfeit of innocence."

That day, True Winthrop had quit work at an early hour as he expected to take an afternoon train for Seaton where the long anticipated "camp" was to be established. As Will had obtained a furlough of a week, he had planned to accompany True, and Mr. Prentiss supposed that the two had started long ago for the cars, when to his surprise, from Uncle Ben's bower he saw the two young men sauntering down the road.

"That doesn't look like going to the cars," thought Mr. Prentiss. "Perhaps Will wants me at the office."

When he reached the office, Will told him that True had changed his plans and had concluded not to start until the next day. He also handed Mr. Prentiss some mail and said, "The expressman passed me to-day in the street and said the bank had notified him that he was to take you some money to pay off the hands and it would arrive before night."

"Indeed," said Mr. Prentiss, "I thought it would not come until to-morrow, and here is our safe gone!"

The safe of the factory had been sent away to be exchanged for a better article, and the latter was expected the next day, at which time Mr. Prentiss wished the money for paying the hands to arrive. The bank was the Moose Mountain National, but it was not located in Barkton, and as the money by this time was on its way to the factory, Mr. Prentiss could not conveniently turn it back to a safe hiding-place.

"Well," exclaimed Mr. Prentiss, "I guess it will be all right after all. Mr. Shattuck and Tim have some night-work here, and I shall be writing in the counting-room till nine, and I will just get them to stay here and do guard duty. I would do it myself, but I have an ugly cold, and ought to be at home looking after it."

"I will stay with pleasure, Mr. Prentiss. I would like the fun," said Will.

Mr. Prentiss declined the offer, remarking to himself, "You may be all right, Will, but too much money has disappeared when you have been on duty to allow me to risk this big sum in your care. Tim and his father, I know I can trust."

The money came with the expressman at twilight, and Mr. Prentiss packed its jingling contents in the heavy, oaken cash-drawer, locking it securely, and then putting the key in his pocket.

"There," he exclaimed, "I guess that will be all right."

Tim and his father were entirely willing to remain at the factory, as in a room opening out of the counting-room there were settees where they could make up beds. In a closet, was bedding that Mr. Prentiss kept for the use of any of his overseers, in whose room work might be pressing at any season of the year, and late inspection at night and early inspection in the morning might be demanded of them.

"You need not both watch," Mr. Prentiss said to Mr. Shattuck and Tim. "One can watch and the other sleep. I will have somebody stop at your house when they go along, and get Mrs. Shattuck to send you a good, warm supper, and a breakfast in the morning."

"Thank you, sir," replied Mr. Shattuck. As this service as watchmen meant extra pay, Tim and his father were very willing to spend the night in the counting-room. They arranged that Mr. Shattuck should watch until

twelve, and then Tim should watch until three. They also divided between them the remaining hours until seven, when a new day of work would begin, or it was expected then it would begin. Work on the morrow, it would be seen that night might be unexpectedly deferred for a long time.

The evening of a very eventful autumn night opened peacefully and merrily in the office of the canning factory.

"Here we are, father!" exclaimed May Shattuck soon after six. "Mother has sent you a hot supper."

"Oh, that is good," replied Mr. Shattuck. "Come in, come in! Mr. Prentiss has gone to the post-office, and Tim and I are all alone. See how comfortable we are!"

A fire had been kindled in the office stove, and the warmth it diffused, was in agreeable contrast with the autumn coolness of the evening air.

Two beds had already been made on the settees in the room adjoining the office, and now on a table Mr. Shattuck made a tempting display of the supper sent from home.

"Well, good night, father! I will report at home that you are doing well here," said May.

"I suppose you are so busy you can't afford time to come home."

"On duty and all's well," said Mr. Shattuck, without making any explanation of the reason of his detention in the factory.

The above report in both of its divisions was true up to a late hour. Mr. Prentiss remained as long as he felt it to be advisable and then went home to doctor a cold which threatened to grow warmer rather than colder and inflame into a fever. Mr. Shattuck had retired to his narrow couch, saying, "Now, Tim, be sure and arouse me if you hear any suspicious noise! Of course you won't, but mind! Be sure and call me if you hear any noise. Don't put it off, but speak!"

Mr. Shattuck considered his final caution necessary, knowing so well Tim's disposition to procrastinate.

"I will, father—"

"Will what? Put it off or speak?"

"Ha-ha! speak, of course! Don't worry."

"I won't worry if you'll do a little for me, and when my watch begins, I will do the worrying for you."

"All right, father!"

"Now wake me if you hear any noise, for we both may need to watch then."

It soon was quiet in the counting-room. Tim could hear the clock ticking there, and he caught also Mr. Shattuck's very audible snore from his quarters, while the wind moaned without. Tim yawned.

"That won't do," he thought, rising and walking about. "I must not get asleep. Is there not something to read? Oh, there is a business directory of some place. Guess I will look at that."

Tim turned over the pages of the directory until he was tired, and then he walked about the office. The clock ticked, his father snored, and the wind kept up its murmuring.

"Well," thought Tim, "this is poky. I don't believe there will be any trouble to-night. Hullo! there goes a carriage."

The wheels rattled away sharply in the night, and afterwards the silence of the place was all the more profound.

"I wish I had some company," said Tim. "If the night-watch was only on!"

In the very busiest seasons, a watchman was employed to look out for the fires, and he would begin his duties in a few days.

Between eleven and twelve, Tim heard a noise. It startled him. He had been drowsy, but this peculiar sound thrilled him. He was

not a coward by any means, but there are certain sounds whether heard night or day, that always affect us peculiarly. The echo of a falling body may startle us, but it is not repeated, and we cease to care for it. But what of a step, say, a careful, cautious, sly step, that another moment may be a trifle bold and then suddenly is hushed as if its owner said, "I was careless then. He must have heard that and I will go more quietly or I can't do all the mischief I had in mind!" We listen with a beating heart,—it is gone—ah! it comes again, that soft, sly tread, creaking a little on the stairs, holding on a moment or ten minutes if need be, till we are asleep again, then advancing, restraining itself, going on tip-toe, hushing its fall—bah!

"I heard a step, I know," said Tim, starting up and going to the door. Outside of the office-door was a street-lamp, the only lamp of that kind in Barkton, and Mr. Prentiss was particular to have it lighted every night.

"It looks," he said to himself, "as if somebody was on guard."

This lamp threw a broad beam of light down on the doorsteps, and as Tim opened the door and looked out, he saw the clear, bright light resting on the steps, and three autumn leaves

—for he afterwards remembered that he counted them—leaves that the wind had whirled upon the steps.

“Nothing here,” said Tim, “but the light. I guess I was mistaken. If I wasn’t mistaken,” he continued to reflect, turning back into the warm office, “then it was somebody who went along the building in front and turned the corner at the right. I have a great mind to wake up father and go out and see what is up.”

It was Tim’s nature to delay everything, and he concluded he would not speak to his father unless he heard the noise again. The place was once more quiet. Half an hour went by. About fifteen minutes before twelve, he heard the sound of steps again. There was no doubt about it now. It was none of your sly, suppressed tip-toeing but a hurried tread, a run, a leaping on the doorsteps. A burglar? A bold one if he were. Tim ran to the office door. To gain it, one went into a short, narrow passage way and three strides, two even, would bring him to the door. There was a window in the upper half, and if one wished, he could look outside and not open the door. When Tim reached this passage-way, he saw somebody on the doorsteps, and then this per-

son boldly grasped the latch of the door and vigorously shook it, for the door was locked.

"Why, who is that!" wondered Tim. Between him and the light, he saw a head, only a head, for the rest of the person was hidden. This head shook. It very noticeably shook.

"Uncle Ben Bowler!" exclaimed Tim.

"What does he want?"

"Hurry!" Uncle Ben was shouting.

"Why, what do you want?" asked Tim throwing the door wide open. He saw then that Uncle Ben had a pail in his hand.

"F-f-fire!" gasped the old man. "Some rubbish back of the factory shed has got—afire—and I tried to put—it out—light came into my window—and that's how I saw it—"

"You don't say! Father! Father!" shouted Tim rushing back into the office, "there's a fire! Father! Fa—"

Tim was in the midst of the utterance of this last word when his father bounded out upon the floor, his hair dishevelled, the bed clothes flapping about him like wings

"What—what, Tim?"

"Rubbish on fire! I'll go out—back of the factory—and put it out, father!"

"Uncle Ben, tell me the prospect," said Mr. Shattuck, dressing as he was talking. "Tim—"

Tim—there is a pail in the long canning room under the bench—here's a match—here's a lantern—and Uncle Ben, let me know about it, quick!"

Mr. Shattuck was trying to dress and find a lantern and give orders at the same time.

"I'll keep guard here, Tim! Rouse the neighbors if necessary!" he added.

They quickly went, Tim finding his pail and hurrying off one way, while Uncle Ben rushed out of the door of the office in the opposite direction.

"Feel like a caged eagle!" said Mr. Shattuck, hastily pulling on his clothes. "I want to be out there, and yet I am in here—can't leave in fact. How did that rubbish get afire! To think it should burn to-night of all nights!"

While Mr. Shattuck was dressing, Tim was hurrying to the big bonfire back of the factory. He could see a little of its light before turning a rear corner of the building, but passing that corner, the full, sharp glare of the fire burst upon him. Tim saw at once what the trouble was. In the rear of the factory was a long, low shed used for various storage purposes. Behind the shed was a large pile of refuse stuff from a field that had been cultivated by the Shattucks the past season. Bean-vines, corn-

stalks, weeds, and other vegetable matter had accumulated during August and September. Tim and his father had hired this field, and worked it when at leisure, employing a third hand when they themselves were busy in the factory. It had been very convenient to pile dead vines and dried stalks in the rear of the shed, but Mr. Shattuck had several times asked Tim to remove it, and Tim as constantly and good-naturedly said, "I will do it, father. I will certainly look after it."

Somebody else had now looked after it and set fire to it, for in no other way could this conflagration be accounted for. A heap of dried vegetable matter turned into a bonfire may seem innocent enough, but on one side of the fire was the shed, and on the opposite a clump of pines. If the shed should catch afire, it would certainly ignite the factory. If, still again, the flames of this burning heap did not start the shed into a blaze, there was the clump of pine trees. If these caught, sooner or later the shed would take afire, unless Tim and any allies could drench it with water. Allies! There was Uncle Ben; there was his daughter Mrs. Jones—she was flying around half-distracted, brandishing a little tin dipper; Billy Jones had two younger brothers, and a sister

older than himself; these three were all out. Billy was away.

Uncle Ben had aroused every living being under his roof, and they had obeyed his directions to "bring suthin' to put water in." One had a gallon tin pail, a second a bowl, and a third a mug, while Mrs. Jones waved her dipper.

"Oh!" shrieked Tim, "the fire is catching in the pines! Here, run, Jimmy"—he called out to one of the Jones brothers—"rouse the neighbors, and on the way, stop at the office and tell father."

Jimmy sprang off at once, and Tim looked round on his rescue-force. Then he gave a hurried glance at the shed, and a second at the pines whose branches the flames first carelessly licked and then began ravenously to devour.

"See here!" he shouted. "All that can be done is to wet the side of the shed next the fire, and save the building if we can. Everybody get a good-sized pail and form a line from that well there to the fire. Uncle Ben, you draw the water at the well and the others pass it along, and I will throw it on the shed."

This small fire-company soon provided itself with pails, and the work of rescue began. Uncle Ben Bowler drew the water and filled

Sammy Jones' pail. This he passed to Mary, his sister, who ran with it to Mrs. Jones. She in turn passed it to Tim who faced the fire and, running along its line, drenched the shed wherever it was most exposed to the heat.

"Oh dear!" thought Tim giving a glance at the roof of the shed. "That will be hotter than a furnace soon, and if we had a ladder—and half-a-dozen men—and—and—" His soliloquy ended in a shout, "Fire-re-re! Fire-re-re!"

He could hear Jimmy Jones as he now ran down the street, crying, "Fire-re-re!"

And hark! Who was it blowing a horn? It was Mr. Shattuck. It chafed him to think there was an enemy in the shape of hot, cruel flame pressing, it might be, closer and closer to the factory, and yet he could render no help. Able to turn here and there, to walk, to run, to leap in one mighty effort—it seemed to him—to the very front of that advancing wall of flame, and yet he was as unable as if he had been bound by a chain to that money-drawer and not left untied to watch it.

"Well," he thought, "I can do something beside staying here and watching; I can go to the door and shout, 'Fire!' I can—"

He stopped and looked up at a tin horn lying on a shelf back of the desk in the count-

ing-room. Why it had been placed there, he knew not, but he imagined that one of Mr. Prentiss' children might have left it there.

"It will do good service now," he said.

Seizing it, he went to the door and standing out upon the steps, he lifted it to his mouth and blew a number of long, sharp blasts.

"Everybody with ears—everybody round here—ought to hear that," he said. "Glad I can do something. I will blow again."

He blew, and Tim was glad to hear it, for he knew it must be an alarm given by somebody and would help bring somebody else. And as if in response to these very summons, a person came, but came from an unexpected quarter. If Mr. Shattuck had turned back into the counting-room,—but he did not for he thought he was doing too much good with his tin horn,—he would have seen a mysterious movement of a window not far from the money-drawer. It was a window opening into the factory, that window which Mr. Prentiss had neglected to notice, the afternoon previous when he had that talk with Will Fairfax about the missing money. He had wondered in his thoughts as he looked about the counting-room, how a person could have entered the place and stolen money without

Billy Jones' knowledge. The counting-room was a late addition to the body of the building and covered this window previously existing in the wall of the factory. It was sometimes and yet rarely opened, for a door had been cut in the wall giving a better way of communication with the factory. Upon the sill and along the sashes of the window, the dust had gathered thick. It was about to be disturbed though, for the window in a strange way moved! It softly rose! It rose higher and higher, and out of the dark behind him, crept into the light before him—a man! A friend to help extinguish the fire in response to those furiously beseeching blasts on Davis Shattuck's horn?

“Toot—toot—toot!” went the horn, “toot-t-t-t!” If Davis Shattuck could only have seen this arrival!

All the time, the man was moving softly, stealthily, steadily toward the money-drawer, and inserting in the lock a key he carried in his hand, quickly turned it. The key gave a sharp, unexpected click.

“Oh!” the man was exclaiming to himself, and he lifted his eyes anxiously toward the door where Davis Shattuck in silence now was waiting for some response to his horn. Mr.

Shattuck's hearing, strained intensely to catch every sound, heard that suspicious click behind him. Was that the echo of an answer to the Shattuck-appeal? He turned, looked back into the office and—dropped his horn! He did not sound any more blasts that people might come. This arrival was enough for him. He appreciated at once its nature. He saw a man with face disguised in some way, crouching over the money-drawer and lifting out of it the bag of coin that had been the occasion of so much anxiety. The watchman sprang for the robber and gripped him and—that was the last Davis Shattuck knew for a while. He was only conscious that something had struck him in the forehead. He had an idea it was a blow from the money bag itself, an ungrateful act on the part of an object that had received so much solicitous care. After this he had no more ideas for five minutes at least. When he began to think again, somebody of the size of the robber was standing over him. Then he thought it was the robber himself. No, it was Billy Jones, saying, "Too bad, too bad, Mr. Shattuck! Let me lift you up and put you on that settee! Your head is bleeding. Did you fall?"

"The money-drawer!" gasped Mr. Shattuck

the moment he could find his tongue, for that useful member seemed to have disappeared altogether.

"The money-drawer?" said Billy, leaving his charge on the settee a moment. "I guess that is all right. I will see."

He came back, saying, in a soothing tone, "It looks all right. It is shut. What do you mean? Guess you got asleep, and have been dreaming, and fell. Here, let me get some water and wipe the blood off your forehead."

"The fire!" murmured Mr. Shattuck.

"Let the rest look after that!" said Billy. "I must look after you. There! I'll use my handkerchief."

Mr. Shattuck was one of the prudent men who always carry a little pin case in a vest-pocket and a bit of sticking plaster in their pocket-book. The former was of no use in this emergency, but the plaster could be, and Mr. Shattuck told Billy in which pocket to find it. This young doctor so dexterously applied the plaster that Mr. Shattuck murmured, "That's nice!" and then he dropped gratefully back into that slumber out of which Tim's sharp, loud call had lately aroused him.

"Well," said Billy, looking at his patient before him, "guess he is all right now!"

"Hullo! What's up?" shrieked a man rushing into the office, panting, nigh breathless. "Factory afire, and—what's the matter with—Shattuck?"

It was Mr. Prentiss, whom the alarm had finally reached, and he looked about with the air of a man distracted for various considerations and hardly knowing what to say or do first.

"Oh, I think it will be all right," replied Billy, trying to say it composedly, though the rapidly increasing clamor about the building excited him.

"Money-drawer all right?" thought Mr. Prentiss, turning to go and then returning. He tried the drawer. Was all that we have been witnessing through the glass of this story an illusion? Had not there been really a theft? Had not the drawer been opened? The drawer was locked, securely locked. And the window that we saw gradually rising, steadily opening, was now shut! It was an innocent looking window as ever was set in the wall of a building.

"Stay here!" shouted Mr. Prentiss to Billy. "Don't leave till I tell you! Shattuck will get over that tumble—but—" he repeated this as he left the counting-room—"I am afraid my building won't survive the fire."

He rushed to the rear of the building to find there a crowd every moment growing bigger, and what a fight it was with the flames! These had attacked all the front of the grove of pines and were rioting everywhere among the branches. The heat was intense, and the shed was smoking in several places. If the shed went, the factory was doomed.

People were fighting the fire wherever they could get a chance. The fight needed a head, and now that Mr. Prentiss had satisfied or thought that he had satisfied himself about the money in the counting-room, he was at liberty to concentrate all his thoughts, all his energies, in plans for the fighting of the fire. He at once supplied the fight with a head. He impressed into service as soon as possible, every vessel in the neighborhood that would hold water and also everybody who could carry water. Three men he put on the roof of the shed, and three at the base of the wall, and from these went lines of men, boys and also women and girls to two wells, one in the factory-yard and the other in the Jones-yard.

"Now, boys," shouted Mr. Prentiss to his heterogeneous forces, "work away!"

It was "splash, splash, splash," along the surface of the roof of the shed and along its

side, and several times, the men who occupied the exposed points in the lines of attack, asked to be splashed also, so great was the heat.

Mr. Prentiss sent to his home and secured all the blankets there. These were spread over threatened portions of the roof or sides of the shed, and thoroughly saturated with water. Steadily, the fire was resisted. Little by little the flames in the grove lowered the defiant banners of scarlet they had raised.

"Every minute, boys," said Mr. Prentiss, "the fire has less to feed on. Hold your ground!"

Bravely the ground was held—in other words the shed was defended and drenched—and the fire having sensibly subsided in the burning grove, the danger was declared to be past.

Mr. Prentiss was as much relieved as if a burden of hundreds of pounds that had been crushing him, were suddenly thrown off. He went up to the people and personally thanked them.

"Ah, Will," he said to Will Fairfax, who had manfully stood and toiled in one of the perspiring lines of firemen, "I am exceedingly obliged to you."

"And, True," he said to True Winthrop, "you have helped me very much."

Then he added to himself, "Perhaps the mystery of your coming to Barkton is solved, and you are here to save my factory."

All which only showed how little Mr. Prentiss understood the real reason of True Winthrop's appearance in Barkton. Mr. Prentiss emphatically expressed his indebtedness to others. To increase his satisfaction, there was a drop of water that suddenly, softly spattered his face when he lifted his hat and wiped his forehead. Then he felt another mild spatter and a third.

"Why," he asked, looking up into a black sky, "why, is this rain?"

Yes, it was the rain sometimes dreaded when it swells and roars in the freshet, but so welcome when the flowers are thirsty and the crops languish, and to-night so acceptable when it came down faster and thicker, rebuking the flames, beating them down lower and lower, till there was only a blackening, sputtering heap, and finally all was dark around the factory, the rain and the night having everything their own way.

"A no'theast storm settin' in!" remarked Uncle Ben. "Glad to see it!"

This "no'theast storm" was not the only rough wind that had set in. One was about to blow in Uncle Ben's own household, that would make aching hearts.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CHASE.

“OH, dear!” exclaimed Dot Fairfax, sighing from a deep place in her heart.

She had been absent a fortnight, visiting a relative, and came home the afternoon following the fire to learn of the great disaster that had been threatened, of the loss of the money which Mr. Prentiss discovered long before morning, of the rough assault upon Mr. Shattuck who was now at home and able to say something for himself, of the arrest of Billy Jones for the theft because as was alleged, he could not satisfactorily prove his innocence, and then of the departure of her brother Will with True Winthrop, that very day, on some kind of a vacation trip. She was sorry that the company had lost any money, sorry that Billy Jones had been charged with theft, but was it any wonder that she felt most severely what was a personal disappointment in the departure of her brother?

"Will said he would leave a note for you on his table," remarked Mrs. Shattuck. Dot eagerly found and read it. The note breathed a cold spirit as if Will knew he was doing a thing that would displease her. He only said that he was going off with True, and he would write when he reached the place where they might be going.

"Might be?" repeated Dot. "Then they don't certainly know where they are going. I know this one thing. I will find out what time they left here, and if I can overtake them, I will."

"Small but spunky," had been Will's description of his sister to a friend. Dot learned that when True and Will left, they were afraid they might be late for the forenoon train, and if tardy they could not take another until the edge of evening.

"Four o'clock!" she murmured. "Raining, and the station three miles away! I have no money to pay for a team, and I won't ask any one to carry me over, and I will walk."

She muffled herself in her water proof, but before leaving her room, she fell on her knees. She was so weary at heart, she was so conscious of loneliness and helplessness. that she

eagerly reached out her arms to that Saviour who once in loneliness and helplessness stretched out his arms upon the cross.

"Sympathy there!" she sobbed, and it seemed as if God's pity embodied in the form of Christ, reached down to her and whispered in her ear its voice of compassion, and threw about her its arm of strength. When she stepped out into the beating rain, she knew she would not go alone. Her preparations had been hasty and her exit was hasty. "Now, I'll be off," she said.

No one of the Shattuck family was at the windows to see her leave, and for this she was grateful.

"I would like to go and get back and not be missed by the Shattucks, if possible," she reasoned. "Will won't care to have people know his sister brought him back."

Glad to slip away unnoticed by the family, she turned in the direction of the railroad station, three miles away. The rain beat down heavily, one of those rains that first seem to come at you and then to go through you. The autumn torches kindled among the maples, every moment threatened to shine with diminished color amid the wild assaults of the rain. The wind too, swept in cold gusts

out of a gray mist that hung low its folds on either side of the road. Dot recalled the day when she came to Barkton. This very same road was then so impressed upon her memory, that she could now anticipate some of its features. Like previous acquaintances were the clumps of bushes and trees that lined the road. She remembered that there were elms whose branches stretched over the road, and these now swayed like the brandished arms of huge giants. There were secluded, dismal nooks where the trees met, and here the shadows of the afternoon seemed to suddenly deepen into those of the night. The little woman trudged on stubbornly, bravely.

When she saw the station, it was after five. Lights flashed out of its low windows, for the night was setting in early. The leaning telegraph poles looked as if they would like to give up the struggle against the assailing storm and lie down in a humble posture with the grass and the weeds and the low bushes about the station. The black rails stretching before the door had a useless air, as if for no purpose had they come out of the Land of Somewhere, and were therefore reaching on to end in the Land of Nowhere. Dot looked in at the windows of the low shabby waiting-room for

"gents," and quickly shrank back into the rain and the gathering shadows.

"True and Will!" she exclaimed. "There they are! They are reading. They have been waiting here all this time."

It had been a very discontented waiting, interrupted only by a noon-call at a neighboring farm-house for a bowl of bread and milk. The window was not very tight, and it allowed the sound of True's voice to escape.

"Oh dear! This is a hateful day! Train though will be here soon," was True's exclamation that reached Dot's ear. "I am going out to walk on the platform a few minutes."

While he passed out of the station by one door, Dot entered another and confronted her brother.

"Will!" she said, trying to speak as composedly and naturally as possible. "How do you do? You were not going off without saying good-bye to me?"

At the same time that she spoke, she held out her hand. Will sprang back. "You here?" he said. He was silent then.

"Oh Dot!" he began again, trying not to appear embarrassed. "Glad—to see you. Why, little g-g-gal, how did you get over?"

"Oh, I walked."

“What a girl you are to walk.”

“Will,” she said, as he looked down into the beautiful features that seemed to express a character irresolute and yielding, but which he knew had something of the firmness of granite, “I don’t want to interfere with your vacation-plans, but I don’t want to see my brother associating with Winthrop.”

“Oh there!” he cried pettishly. “It is only a little vacation-trip, and I expect to make it bring me in a little business.”

“Business! Beware of business with True Winthrop!”

“What do you know about True Winthrop’s business transactions?”

Should she tell him of those days of past shame, when in a low groggery she had pleaded with this same True Winthrop not to sell liquor to her father? True had never in Barkton given her to understand that he remembered her, and perhaps he had forgotten a transaction that is not unusual in such dens of wickedness. Should she bring it up now in Will’s presence to arouse Will’s indignation? The exposure that might save the son would dishonor the name of the father. She hesitated. She had another weapon she could use, a weapon too that would not cut the hands

of the party wielding it. She would try this.

"There, Will! See this!" she exclaimed. She held up a picture peculiarly labeled.

"Will, while I was away lately, my friends took me into a police station. They had a rogues' gallery there. I asked them to let me take a copy of this."

It was True Winthrop's face. Attached to it was the title "rogues' gallery."

Will walked up and down the waiting-room, looking at the picture with its uncomplimentary title, and shaking his head in surprise."

"That Will's bag?" thought Dot, noticing a small travelling bag on a bench. Impressed with the conviction that it must be Will's property, she hastily raised it, but seeing on it the initials "T. W.," as quickly dropped it.

"What's that?" she said. Her ear had caught a sharp clink inside the bag.

The door suddenly opened and True rushed up to the bag.

"Careless in me to leave my things round!" he exclaimed. In his anxiety to make sure of his property, he had failed to notice Dot. He now stared at her almost rudely, as if he anticipated an interference with his plans.

"Good evening," he said coldly.

"Good evening, Mr. Winthrop," replied Dot. She did not add this assertion, but she looked it, every letter of it ; "You see I am here, Mr. Winthrop."

Yes, and her presence made him very uneasy. Will was at the other end of the room, striding away gloomily, and intently looking at the picture in his hand.

"Will!" shouted True, now holding up a glove." "Have you seen the mate of this?"

Dot's sharp, bright eyes took a picture of this glove. Somehow, the object fascinated her attention and riveted the look fastened upon it. The glove was one of brown woolen. It was very much worn at the finger-tips.

"A brown woolen glove and all broken away at the fingers' ends!" thought Dot, making as minute an examination of the object as if she had been specially commissioned to do this thing.

"Have you seen the mate of this, I say?" called out its owner in a voice offensive for its tone of command.

"I havn't seen your glove," said Will carelessly. "See here, though! True, I have got your picture, havn't I?"

Will held out the copy of True's face, but

covered with his hand the uncomplimentary title at the top.

"Supposing it is? Where did you get it?" asked True.

Will now uncovered the label at the top! A look of fiendish hate was flashed out of True's black eyes, and he would have snatched the picture away, but Dot's eyes were upon him, ready to follow every movement and even to anticipate it, for her nimble fingers quickly covered the picture, and she quietly, triumphantly said, "That picture is mine, Mr. Winthrop! You can't have it, though you allow it is your likeness."

"Where did you get that?" roared True.

"Out of a 'rogues' gallery in a police station, where you are not forgotten, be assured," said Dot. She had now transferred the picture to her pocket.

"Toot-t-t-t!"

It was a shriek from the whistle of the locomotive that was rushing up to the station the train that might bear Will away with his master, True Winthrop. It was a scene of vivid interest in the waiting-room. There stood little Dot, her dark, blue eyes bent upon True and flashing out defiance. There was Will, his handsome features expressive of won-

der, but no longer of indecision. And there was True Winthrop. He was attempting a look of composure, but it was like the violence of a thunder-cloud trying to subside into the peace of a fair weather sunset-sky.

“Nonsense!” he said. “Nonsense, Will! It’s only somebody that looks like me. Get your traps and come aboard! I can explain it all.”

Boom-m-m-m!

The train was roaring up to the station.

“Good-bye!” said Will. “I am not going. I’ll let my travelling bag stay down there in the corner where I left it.”

“All aboard!” shouted a railroad official dressed like a conductor, and thrusting his head inside the door of the waiting-room.

“Come, Will! Don’t be a fool!” cried True, hurrying toward the door. As he moved away, hastily grasping his bag, Dot thought she heard again a sharp, suspicious clink. Will was shaking his head, clasping his hands behind his back.

“I can’t go with the person in that picture,” called out Will. The bell of the locomotive was now ringing a violent, “Come aboard! Come aboard! Ding—ding—ding!”

“Do you mean to say that is my picture?”

angrily shouted True, stepping back into the room, but leaving the door open.

"Yes, sir," said Dot, stepping forward promptly.

"Train's er-goin'!" shrieked a boy who was standing on the platform outside the door.

"I'll—I'll—" shouted True brandishing his unoccupied fist, and springing outside. What it was that True would or would not do, Will and Dot were unable to learn, for True was obliged to make for the cars a rush so precipitate, that he could not be heard. Will and Dot hastened to the door, and saw True clinging to the rail of the rear platform of the last train, drawing himself up the steps as quickly as possible. Then amid the rattle and roar and bell-ringing, he was swiftly borne away.

"Oh thank God!" ejaculated Dot, clasping her hands and looking up. Will did not see her. He was trying to recover from his bewilderment, and realize that vacation-plans had been suddenly, seriously interrupted.

"Well, Dot," he said, turning toward her, "I guess you did a good thing then. I didn't dare think it of True, and I hated to turn my back on him, but I guess you were right."

"Don't you suppose, Will, I hated to inter-

rupt my brother's plans? But something had to be done."

"Spunky little gal!" said Will, looking down in the old affectionate way. "You wouldn't think she could do such things. Well, we will go."

He was recovering from his disappointment with that suddenness of change in his feelings so natural to him, and permitted Dot to lead him out of the station. Apparently, he led, but it was Dot in reality.

"There is no stage at this time, Dot."

"Don't want any, Will. I feel that I could walk ten miles."

"When we get to the corner where the mill-road, as they call it, joins ours, we may meet an express-team."

"I don't care whether we do or not. I feel strong enough, Will, to pull the team if the horses should give out."

She looked up into his face with an expression of joy and triumph, and he looked down, this big, protecting brother, and said in his patronizing fashion, "What a great, strong Dot!"

When in their walk back, they came to the corner of the mill-road, no rattling wheels of any express-team could be heard as they

looked off into the darkness and intently listened.

"I am just as well pleased, and better satisfied to have it so," thought Dot. "I can send Will home alone now. He would feel terribly if anybody knew I brought him back."

When they reached the Shattucks', she said, "You just go in, Will—need not say anything about me—and I will come soon."

A little later, Mrs. Shattuck found Will in his room, packed away in a home-upholstered rocking chair, and musing before an open fire.

"You got back, Will?" she inquired. "I thought you had left on a vacation-trip."

"Concluded to give it up, Mrs. Shattuck."

"And here am I!" said Dot, pushing open the door and holding out to Mrs. Shattuck a letter. "I found that in the post-office."

"Why, where have you been? Seems to me it took you some time to bring that from the post-office."

"Here I am!" said Dot, and then she went hastily up-stairs.

"Arvie!" she called when on the threshold of the door of her chamber.

There was no answer.

"I am glad to be alone," thought Dot, as she entered. The room was not wholly dark,

for the last of an open fire mildly glowed on the hearth. Dot removed her wet clothes and then sat down before the fire, crouching on the broad hearth. She covered her face with her hands. She cried. She prayed, and as she heard the rain splashing down, thanked God that her brother was not in the companionship of one around whose soul raged a storm of evil passions worse than any violence in nature.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FINGER MARKS IN THE DUST.

“**T**HEY look queer, don’t they, Dot?”
“They do, Mr. Shattuck.”

The young lady and the carpenter were inspecting a mysterious print in the dust on the sill of that window through which that late burglar had entered the office of the factory.

“See here! What do they look like?” asked Mr. Shattuck. “Wrong-doing is sure to leave its track behind.”

“Does it, so that you can see it? That is quite a nice point, Mr. Shattuck. I think all who have to hunt out evil would be glad to have it so, and have a clear track to hunt by. Does mischief make its mark so that you can detect the marker?”

“I guess I shall have to state that thing again, Dot. Wrong does leave a mark somewhere in the character. On the outside it is not always seen and detected, I suppose—but I *know* it is within.”

Yes, the wrong-doer always leaves his mark behind him. Men may not see it, and so track the wrong to its source. There is the print of evil deeds, however, made on the character. It is a more permanent impress and far sadder than any left on material things, and these prints the eye of God sees readily though men's vision may not.

Dot stooped so as to see the dust-marks in the range of the light falling through the window.

"Looks like a hand, Mr. Shattuck."

"Does it, Dot? Let me see. My eyes are getting old. Not so sharp as yours."

Mr. Shattuck now squinted at the print on the sill.

"I don't know but you are right. Let's get Mr. Prentiss here. I will call him in. He is out on the door-steps."

Mr. Prentiss came, looked, and corroborated the opinion of the others.

"Now if we could only find a hand that would fit that impression," said Mr. Prentiss, "it would be conclusive."

"It would not do to ask some people to try their hand here," said Mr. Shattuck. "But I don't believe the hand of Billy Jones would fit. I can't think Billy is guilty."

"Get him," suggested the superintendent.

Poor Billy was, after his arrest, released on bail which was readily furnished, and was wandering about, protesting his innocence and yet grieved to find himself in the shadow of a serious suspicion. He was a popular young fellow, had been interested in the special services at the school-house, and there were very few who cared to see his good reputation blotted with a crime like that involved in the charge. There were those in Barkton though, who were not unwilling to see a stain on the character of one interested in the services at the school-house.

"Billy," said Dot, "wouldn't you like to lay your hand in some finger prints on the window-sill in the office?"

"You found some? Just give me a chance to try them!" cried Billy eagerly. "Oh Dot, there's a bottom to this trouble we haven't touched yet! The right man, and he is a wrong man at the same time, will yet be found."

"I think so, Billy. You come and try!"

What an anxious trial of Billy's hand! A group of curious spectators surrounded him. There were Mr. Prentiss, Mr. Shattuck, Tim and May Shattuck, Dot, and Will, and Arvie,

and several workmen from the factory. All strained their eyes, bending forward to catch as near and good a look as possible. Billy stretched his fingers of either hand along the lines of the impression in the dust. The thumb was too small each time, so were the forefingers, every finger indeed!

“It’s not a fit!” cried Arvie.

“That is so!” said Mr. Shattuck.

A shout went up from the party, a glad hurrah.

“Billy,” said Mr. Prentiss, “I accept this testimony, and I withdraw all my charges and beg your pardon.”

“You needn’t beg anything, Mr. Prentiss. You did what you thought was right.”

All this time of the extension of congratulations to Billy by those present. Dot was bending down over the print in the dust.

“Either a big hand,” she said to Will Fairfax, “or the person might have had on gloves, Will.”

“You are right, little gal, and the ends of the fingers look broken, don’t they?”

“I think they do.”

At many supper-tables that night, there were earnest discussions about the marks in

the dust, to whom they might belong, and whether the printer of this cabalistic sign would ever be found out.

Dot Fairfax after tea had gone to her brother's room. They were talking before the open fire, when the door bell pulled, and somebody said that he had a package for Will. It was the expressman, and he handed Will a little package, saying it was from the agent of the railroad station, and that the latter had sent a glove which had been picked up and he "thought it might belong to William Fairfax, who had been over at the station, for he couldn't find out that it belonged to anyone about there."

"True Winthrop's missing glove!" exclaimed Dot, when she and Will were alone and had opened the package.

"I guess you are right, Dot," said Will. The glove had been dropped on the table. There it lay, Dot recoiling from it as if it were a venomous reptile whose limbs were hidden in a sheath of brown woolen, and any moment the fingers might crook into claws and the thing begin to crawl.

"I know what I would like to do," said Dot, "and, Will, if you will let me, I will do it now. May I take the glove?"

“What is it?” he replied, interested in the “little gal’s” energy.

“Wrap that thing up and lend it to me for this evening.”

“What is little gal up to now? Well, you may have it.”

When Tim and Mr. Shattuck went that evening to the factory to do an item of night-work, Dot and Dot’s budget went with them. When they reached the counting-room, they found Mr. Prentiss there.

“Mr. Prentiss,” said Tim, “if you are not tired of looking at those dust-marks, please try this thing and see if it’s a fit.”

Out of its wrapper came the glove, and a curious ring of four bent over the window-sill.

“The thumb fits!” said Mr. Prentiss. “This finger too—that—one—the dust is getting rubbed out, but I just took the precaution to pencil about it—look! That fills the bill, I think.”

“Yes, yes!” said Dot.

There lay the glove filling out the form of the impression. It seemed as if a human hand would show itself occupying the glove, and behind would be a human arm and above—whose face would it be?

"The ends of the fingers of this glove are worn off," said Tim, "and you look at the print and see—"

"If the ends of the fingers there are broken off? I ran my pencil about the marks, and the edges are not very even. It's a good fit! Whose glove is it!" asked Mr. Prentiss.

"True Winthrop's," said Dot.

"True Winthrop!" said Mr. Prentiss, who began to get a new idea on the subject of the reason why True Winthrop came to Barkton.

"PLUNDER!" was the motive-word whose letters Mr. Prentiss began to read amid the doings of True Winthrop.

"But," said Mr. Prentiss, "is there any other evidence it was True!"

"He is about Billy Jones' size, so that I thought it was Billy you see," remarked Mr. Shattuck, "the time the counting-room was entered."

"I must see Will Fairfax, if I can," asserted Mr. Prentiss.

"He is at home," said Dot.

"Tim, I want you to come up to your house with me. Mr. Shattuck, you might finish your job, and come soon as you can," said Mr. Prentiss.

News in a country-place seems at times to fly about as quick as the telegraph will carry it in the city. Tim went to the post-office before going home, and talking there about the robbery, simply said a glove had turned up that was interesting. This trivial, indefinite remark was enough for the construction of a great variety of rumors that went as if winged all over town. One of those winged rumors reached Uncle Ben Bowler. He was so disquieted, he went at once to the home of the Shattucks, to pack away in his conversation-quiver any arrows that might be shot as missiles elsewhere in defence of his beloved grandson, Billy.

When Mr. Prentiss, Tim and Dot entered the Shattuck sitting-room, they found a group very anxious to talk with them.

The astonished circle talked over the news eagerly.

"Tim, have you any idea where True is?" asked Mr. Prentiss.

"Dot here told me that Will said True did not exactly know where he was going, but Seaton had been talked of as one place. Now, I think of it, he in a talk once said he was very much interested in the place," replied Tim.

"I have an idee," said Uncle Ben, his head shaking as if to intensify his speech, "if he gets there, I have an idee he will want to use a yaller boat I once had an adventure in, 'cause—'cause—"

"What?" asked Mr. Prentiss, nervously.

"'Cause he seemed to be much interested in it when I spoke of it."

Dot Fairfax here said she would like to have "True's bag" examined.

"Why!" asked Mr. Prentiss.

"Oh, I have my suspicions," said Dot. She was not ready to say she had lifted True's bag at the station, and had been suspicious of the money-like clink she heard, for it would have been a confession of her visit to the station. She could not get rid of the conviction that True was the thief.

"I want to see Will Fairfax," said Mr. Prentiss, rising to make a call on Will, who was in his room," and then I want to see you again, Tim."

Mr. Prentiss learned nothing new from Will, who had not been admitted by True to any share in his accomplishments or plans. True took Will with him as an agreeable companion, and because it might be convenient to use one who was so plastic to any manipulator's touch.

"Tim," said Mr. Prentiss, who had formed a decision with his characteristic promptness, and now took the young man aside, "I start in the morning for Seaton. I shall take one of the town constables with me, and I want you to go as a guide about Seaton with me. Don't tell anyone save your father and mother, and tell them to keep still, for our plans might leak out and some one of True's friends might get hold of them and send him word. We go in the morning, the first train. I will call for you."

"I will go, sir."

Mr. Prentiss said something else. Tim wanted to open a small grocery store. He had asked Mr. Prentiss to be one of two friends to advance money enough for this venture. Mr. Prentiss told Tim that the stolen money was really his, and only nominally the factory's. He had purposed to lend it to the factory. When stolen, it was still his money.

"Tim, you wanted some money. I feel poor, but if I recover the amount of the theft, or pretty near it, I will let you have what you asked for that you might open store."

What an air-castle now towered in the Shat-

tuck thought! Tim, a rising young merchant! What an opportunity! Much was said about it at home. If Mr. Prentiss helped, another man would also aid, and Tim would be a great merchant.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE OLD TIDE-MILL AGAIN.

“**Y**OU can smell the sea-weed here,” observed one of a party of three, riding one afternoon in a wagon along a Seaton road leading to the shore of the ocean. The speaker was Barnabas Locke, constable.

“And there’s the old tide-mill, Mr. Prentiss! How natural it looks!” said another, even Tim Shattuck.

Mr. Prentiss had been in a silent mood. After leaving the steam cars, Mr. Prentiss wished at once to take a wagon for the last stage of their journey.

“Let’s get dinner first,” said Tim.

“Buy something at the baker’s and eat it by the way and push on,” suggested Mr. Prentiss.

“Hold on!” said Tim, and he carried his point. “Take it comfortable,” was Tim’s thought. “The thief is ours!”

“Lost an hour!” Mr. Prentiss kept moodily thinking, but when he saw the mill, and a man

in the road, he exclaimed, "Don't he look like a miller?"

"Exactly!" said the broad-shouldered constable from Barkton. "He looks something like a bag of meal out walkin'."

"That is David Ransom, the miller, the one we think True Winthrop is boarding with, if the Seaton people's stories are to be believed, and I guess they are," said Tim Shattuck. "They are pretty honest down here. I know them."

"I hope we sha'n't be disappointed this time," said Mr. Prentiss. "As we came along, we telegraphed in all directions, and gave notice of the suspected robber."

"You want me to ask David Ransom if he knows about True, Mr. Prentiss?"

"I would like to have you, Tim."

"How-d'y-do, Mr. Ransom?" called out Tim.

"Oh Timothy, this you? Where did you come from! How's all the folks?"

"They are all well. We are just from Barkton, Mr. Prentiss here, Mr. Locke, and I. Mr. Ransom, we want to find a young man whom we have tracked down here, and people in Seaton say that somebody like him is down this way."

“What kind of a lookin’ young man, Timothy?”

“He has sharp, black eyes, Mr. Ransom—sort of look through you and have a lot of mischief in them—and he did not have it up in Barkton, but people we ask, say a young man like ours has a full beard. Guess he is about twenty-five years old, and he is not quite so tall as I am, but is built something like me.”

David Ransom had keen gray eyes under heavy, overhanging brows, and they were directed rapidly toward Mr. Prentiss, Tim, and Barnabas, searching the three faces in succession.

“What’s the young man done that so many of you want him all at once?” replied David, like a soldier skirmishing before the battle fully begins.

“Well, Mr. Ransom, we can trust you,” said Tim. “You are not the man to harbor a thief?”

“Why, no,” said David, whose sentiments were all on the side of the enforcement of laws against dishonesty. He was now ready to give what information he could. “Are you after a thief?”

“After a man who has carried off about a

thousand dollars in cash," said Mr. Prentiss, "clean cash."

"You don't say! Well! There has been a young fellow a-boardin' for a few days at my house. His eyes are black, and I must say I don't like 'em. He has a full beard, big one."

"Did he say where he hailed from?" inquired Barnabas.

"Not a syllable! That's the mystery. Don't seem to come from anywhar, or doin' anything, and said he came to get a leetle rest. He has paid me all up and thought he might go to-day."

"Where is he now?" asked Mr. Prentiss.

"He took his traps and wanted to go on the water awhile—"

"Didn't he leave anything at your house?" said Tim.

"Nothin'. There's a leetle yaller boat down at the mill he took a shine to—"

"Uncle Ben Bowler's boat," explained Tim. "What he used to have, I mean."

"That's the one. Mine now for some time."

"Then you think he may have left for good, that is, left your house?" said Mr. Prentiss.

"I do."

"And he has now gone off in that boat?"

"Without doubt! Can't help sayin' if you had come an hour ago, I was at the mill with that ere chap. You might have nabbed him there."

"An hour! O Timothy!" said Mr. Prentiss. "Sorry!" Tim was sorry too. The money needed for that grand store would then probably have been forthcoming in part, and this part would have fetched the other that was desired.

"Where did you tie that boat?" asked Ransom.

"Down at the mill, below the gates. If he went off in the boat and as I said, I think he doubtless did, he will come back to the mill."

"We will move on the mill," said Commander Locke. "Could you go down, Square Ransom?"

"Oh yes," said the miller, tickled with this honorary title.

The "Square" offered to "jump in behind," and the Law's imposing force of four all moved away in the wagon. It was a clear autumn day. A northwest wind had taken its vigorous broom to the sky and cleaned it of

the clouds. Then it had swept the sea free from mist, so that the waves ran blue and sharp out to a distinct horizon-edge. Above those rows of blue waves, against that bright sky, rose the black walls of the old tide-mill. The flats beyond it were now covered with the insweeping tide, and under a bridge leading up to the door of the mill, swiftly rushed the cool, green sea-water into the mill-pond with its rusty, grassy edges. The wagon-load of four men halted on the bridge.

"If that boatman should see us, he might suspect suthin', square," said Commander Locke.

"We can tie up on this side of the mill, by the door," suggested the new-titled "square."

"Nobody will see us here from the river," said Tim.

"Wonder where that yaller boat is," remarked the commander. "Do you see it, square?"

"I don't. It is not where I gin'rally keep it, and it is gone out on the river. You all come inside and we will git a glass and look out of a rear winder."

From a window in the rear of the mill, the party now looked out upon the water pouring

in from the ocean to fill the mill-pond. Each one took his turn and put himself at the end of David Ransom's spy glass and looked in the direction of the mouth of the river which near the mill became a creek.

"I see the boat and a man in it," said the miller, and the rest of the party confirmed this opinion. The boat had been recently painted, and the shade of lively yellow it displayed and the black form of its occupant were in sharp contrast with the bright blue of the ocean.

"I can see it quite well with the naked eye," said Tim.

"The boat is coming in," added the miller.

"Let us have a council of war," said Commander Locke. "Let me see; she will tie up at the mill, and does he then come up through the buildin', or how?"

"Come down to the landin'," said the miller. "I'll show ye."

They all hurried down stairs, and by way of a little door, stepped out upon a platform to which the boat was usually moored.

"I see now," said Mr. Prentiss. "He must go into the mill to get out upon the bridge and go home or wherever he does go next. Then I propose that some one close the out-

side door leading out upon the bridge and stand guard there. When True has passed in here a second man watch his chance and close this door down here. The other two of us can be inside and follow our man up and corner him."

"Perhaps our friend, the square, will see that the outer door above is closed and jest guarded inside," said Commander Locke. This post of honor was acceptable to the "square."

"And, Tim, when our man is fairly in the trap, will you see that this door down here is closed and stay on guard?"

"I will, Barnabas."

"Then Mr. Prentiss, you and me will foller the young man up and pleasantly suggest to him that he had better go home with us."

"Do you 'spose he will show fight?" asked David, the miller. "He looks ugly, sometimes. My wife has said that she has been awful scat of him."

"If he should show fight, the Law will look after him," and Barnabas as he said this, looked as if he were the very embodiment of the majesty of the Law, as if its strength also in the shape of numberless "billies" and a Gatling gun were concealed within him.

He soon posted his forces, for the miller reported that the "yaller boat" was but a "leetle way from the mill." Barnabas considered the horse and wagon a part of his small army, and they were so located in front of the building that they could not possibly be seen by anyone coming by water to the mill. The miller was stationed inside the door above. This first had been locked, Tim was near the platform door but hidden by the shadows of a corner, ready to close this door as soon as True had entered. Barnabas and Mr. Prentiss were ready to spring out of another corner and seize the thief.

"Let's have an understandin'," added Barnabas. "Square, you and Tim, don't stray so far from your doors but that you can git to them and look after them and anybody who comes to them—in a flash! Jest remember; your place is the doors—unless we should call to you. Let me see! Any winders on these lower floors where an enterprisin' man could drop out and so run off?"

"They all open on sides of the mill where the water is, exceptin' one in front. That is near my door. It is in the countin'-room. There is a nail over it and I'll look after it."

"We are all ready then," said the valiant commander of these mighty forces of the Law. "We will go to our corners and keep still as kittens. I guess we will trap our man. If we had a boat, we would tackle him on the water. We havn't, and we must trap him here." This eminent strategist shook his head in great satisfaction.

The old mill as "a trap" did not look at all different from the old mill doing service in the grinding of corn. There it stood, its roof stretching quietly up into the sunshine, while around the base of its walls peacefully rippled the water stealing in from the ocean. True, there was an open door at the platform and a closed door on the bridge-side of the mill, and this might suggest traps which are notorious for having one door by which you can enter but there is no provision for going out. That bridge-door though was always shut when the grinding was over, and that platform-door naturally would be open when anybody might be on the water using the boat generally moored there. This innocent aspect the mill preserved as the party in the boat came up the creek. Tim peeped through a crack in the wall near him and could very easily see the unsuspecting oarsman.

"That felt hat is one True Winthrop has always worn in cool weather," thought Tim. "Those are his shoulders, and he wears that kind of a coat."

"Hist!" said Barnabas in a whispered yet sharp tone. "Do you see him, Tim?"

"He is very near," replied Tim softly. "I hear his oars."

The measured click of the oars could be distinctly heard.

"True is a very good oarsman," reflected Tim.

Free from all apprehension, the boatman lazily impelled his little craft up to the mill. Did any consciousness of ill-gotten gains disturb him? If so, it did not show itself in his manner. He looked up to the sky, down into the water, and no shade of anxiety clouded his face. "He is nearer now," thought Tim.

The sound of oars dropping in the boat as they were shipped, first one and then the other, could be heard by those in ambush. "There is True stepping on the platform," thought Tim. "He steps heavy. He does not suspect anything; steps sort of careless."

Suspect? This empty-seeming mill, never doing anything more serious than the grinding of corn, in and out of whose cracks now stole

the wind with a hushed murmur, around whose walls the ripples broke in softest echoes, along whose roof stretched the silent sunshine—who would have ever charged this building with participation in a grave plot to nab a thief, that it was actually hiding and protecting four men ready to spring out upon this unsuspecting boatman? He coughed.

“True had a little cough, I remember, the other day,” thought Tim. “There he is—stepping into the mill. Wonder if he has any idea of what we are up to! It will make an interesting story at Barkton.”

He had not advanced more than ten feet into the trap, when Tim rushed from his corner, seized the door, slammed and bolted it, and then planted his broad shoulders against it with the air of one who knows what he has done and feels that he has done it well, and it shall not be undone. There was the victim securely boxed in the trap! Tim though could not see him. There was no window on this floor of the mill, which was a story lower than that of the counting-room. When the door was shut, all light was excluded save what might enter surreptitiously through cracks in the walls. It was a dingy, gloomy place, where timidity would be increased, and

where any suspicion of danger would be intensified into a painful apprehension. The moment Tim shut his door, Barnabas and the superintendent rushed forward to seize and hold a figure that the darkness had quickly swallowed up. They heard a startled exclamation. They felt under their anxious hands a man's coat, but it slipped away, and then there was a scramble for the stairway. Down this came a scanty beam of light in which danced the dust disturbed by the men in ambuscade. It was a sudden and fearful interference with the intentions of this late arrival by that "yaller boat." There was the sudden, violent slamming of the door; there was that abrupt throwing of the whole place into the dark; there was that assassin-like assault of enemies in these dungeon-like quarters! It was sufficient to disturb the equanimity of even a man as boastful of self-control as True Winthrop. But who would gain the stairway first? There was a stentorian shout from Commander Locke, "Don't let him go!" and then came Mr. Prentiss' response, "I've got ye, villain! Running off with people's money!"

And now was raised a fearful clamor, a shriek, a yell, "Help-p-p-p! murder-r-r-r! Oh—oh—oh! Help-p-p-p!"

"Keep still, young man! There, there, quiet!" cried Barnabas, trying to hold the squirming, groaning fugitive. "Bring the handcuffs, square!" he shouted. Now came louder appeals:

"Quick! Handcuffs-s-s! In the countin'-room! Light, Tim, light! Open that door! We've got the thief!"

The "thief" though was tugging and groaning while no longer shouting. When the "square" appeared, bringing the handcuffs which Barnabas had left up-stairs, he saw by the light streaming through the now opened platform-door, a very violent struggle at the foot of the stairway.

"Oh—oh—help-p-p!" shouted the prisoner frantically, when he caught sight of the miller.

"Help—uncle!"

"Why—why!" said David—"who is this?"

Barnabas and Mr. Prentiss now looked into the flushed features of their struggling prize, and it—was not True Winthrop!

"Lem-me 'lone!" said the stranger indignantly.

"Why, this is my nephew James, I do believe!" said the miller.

Barnabas and Mr. Prentiss drew off at once.

"Be g—pardon—I—thought—you—were

the—thief—we were after!” said Barnabas apologetically, panting as hard as the young man.

“’Bout as—much—thief—as—you are! This—is—a—great—way to treat—f o l k s—spring—in’ at—em—in the dark.”

As he spoke, the young man smoothed down his hair, drew on his coat which had been half pulled off from his shoulders, and looked round for his hat.

“Great—way—to treat folks! I’ll take the law—to—ye.”

“We—are very—sorry—to make a mistake,” said the puffing superintendent of the canning factory, “but when you—have lost—almost a thousand—dollars—if you get—the wrong—person—it is to—be excused.”

“Yes,” said Tim stepping up, “and may be you know where the thief is, for you went off in his boat. Any way, he went off in a boat like yours, I know.”

The young man was now sobering fast. He began to understand what was the nature of the mistake.

“Well—I didn’t know he was a thief. He came to me and said he was going away and wanted me to row him over the river in Uncle David’s boat, and that is what I did, and I

landed him on the other side, and he walked off with his traps."

"Let it all go—the mistake we made!" said Mr. Prentiss. "Tell us how long ago that was."

The young man gave the time, and added, "I landed him at what we call the ferry-ways, where all the boats go."

"Can't we drive round and cut him off?" asked Mr. Prentiss.

"May be you can," said the miller. "It's worth tryin'. You take the first turn to the right and go straight ahead till you come to four corners. There, the first turn to the right, takes you into the 'long road' runnin' down to the ferry."

"I guess you can ketch him," said the nephew, who was disposed to help in spite of the rough treatment he had received. "He wanted to take a lunch he said, at the saloon near the ferry-ways, and then—I don't know where he goes."

"All right! Here is something for you," said Mr. Prentiss, slipping a dollar into the hand of nephew James. The nephew grinned, and looked as if for another dollar he would be willing to stand another seizure. He now proffered some advice.

“If you”—he turned toward Tim—“would take my team which is hitched in the yard of my house, you might cut in across the woods by a cart path, and come out on the long road not far from the ferry-ways and—and—”

“We would have True Winthrop boxed up between two teams, one at the further end and the other at the ferry end of long road, would we?” asked Mr. Prentiss.

“That’s it ’zackly,” said the nephew.

“I’ll go with Tim,” said the miller.

At once, Mr. Prentiss and Barnabas went to the waiting wagon at the door. They sprang into it and the wheels rattled away “as if a lightning flash were chasing them,” Tim said.

The miller and Tim went to the nephew’s house, and there in the yard was a team waiting for James, who was expecting to drive off in it to a grocery store a mile away, but his expectation had been interrupted by the request of his uncle’s boarder to “put him across the river.” The horse therefore had been allowed to remain in harness until the young man might return. Tim and the miller jumped into the wagon and its wheels turned in the direction of the cart-path through the woods.

Mr. Prentiss' last words to Tim had been, "Don't let him skip! Remember about that money!" The would-be merchant said, "I'm good for him!"

CHAPTER XXII.

TOO LATE THIS TIME.

BUT that "boarder," what was he doing? One thing he did was to quietly enjoy a lunch at the ferry restaurant. If Tim had seen him, he would have said, "That's like True! Always did eat like a pig!"

It was True, or the Untrue, the thief, who ever kept near him the little bag whose clinking contents Dot Fairfax noticed. When he had comfortably lunched at the restaurant, he started for the nearest railroad-station, there to take the cars. While his pursuers were eagerly following up the chase, he was leisurely trudging along, enjoying a conversation with himself; "I did not go to Barkton for nothing, did I? I had no special reason for going there in the first place, only I thought I might pick up a penny somehow in that country-place, and I picked it up in small quantities at first, but didn't I find it in a big lump at last, ha-ha! I thought if I started a bonfire in

that heap back of the shed, it would interfere with that watch in the counting-room, and give me a chance to operate. It did call off Tim Shattuck. I guess his father will be careful how he interferes with any of my operations another time. I don't think anybody suspected me at Barkton, for I went to work with those at the fire, and old Prentiss thanked me! Wasn't it done well, getting a little money for myself and then helping put out the fire? Ingenious! Wish though I had found the glove I lost. It is all right though. If Dot Fairfax, the little booby, hadn't come to the station, I should have had Will for company, and if need be, and I was chased, I could have slipped some of the plunder into his bag and fixed it so that he would have been suspected and arrested, and I got away. But here is Genius, and I guess Genius can manage it—I am good for 'em! I hadn't made up my mind where to come when I left Barkton, but thought I would come here until I got my bearings, and the old mill with its dark corners that I had heard about, I knew would make a good hiding-place if I needed one. This money in my bag! Sort of tiresome, carrying it round. Wish I could have had a chance to change it into bills, and it could have been

taken round more easily, but it wouldn't have done to turn it into bills. People would have wondered where this chap got so much money, ha-ha! I see by the papers they are telegraphing round an account of the theft, and the next time I see a paper, it may mention me as a thief and they may venture to describe me, but if they suspect me, nobody would identify me with this big black beard. I wonder if that stupid old miller thought me queer! His wife was timid; I saw that. I had a good time there, and it gave me a chance to think what I had better do. Guess I will put for Canada. Well, good-bye, Seaton!"

Here he turned to look back upon the river and the old tide-mill. "Good-bye, old river! If Uncle Ben Bowler could have seen me in his 'leettle yaller boat,' he would have been interested. And the other dear folks at Barkton, I wonder what they are doing! Wouldn't old Prentiss like to know who took his money and know just where I am, and that blundering Barnabas Locke, constable, ha-ha! That fool of a Locke, wouldn't he make an enterprising character to go after a runaway! I don't know of another who thinks he knows more or can do less, save just one, and that is Tim Shattuck, the conceited booby! Better

make Tim assistant-constable and send him after True Winthrop, say, ha-ha! Well, they wouldn't know me with this false beard on. Hullo! Who is that coming? Some folks are driving fast, it seems to me."

True saw a wagon in which were two men riding at all possible speed. How those wagon wheels did clatter at the heels of a galloping old horse!

"What does that mean?" thought True. "Somebody coming to the ferry-ways, I guess. In a hurry to get across probably."

True could hear the horse's hoofs pounding out that heavy, hurried gallop. He could see one of the men rising in his seat as if to urge forward the horse. The team had come so much nearer that True concluded one of the men had sandy hair and the other had gray hair. "One has broad shoulders and the other—why," said the staring True, "I do believe they look like Barnabas Locke and old Prentiss—I'm far sighted—and whew! They must be after—" True did not definitely in his mind shape the thought, "*me*," but he acted it, for he turned upon his heels and ran as fast as he could. He was no mean runner. He was so good at it that some people charged him with having Indian blood.

“Which way shall I go?” wondered True. “Back, along the road, or shall I turn aside and go across the fields?”

If there had been forests lining the road, he might have turned aside and sought a shelter in their shadows, but there was no such protection offered him. On the left of True, there were open fields, pasture-lands exposed to the sweep of the strong autumn winds, and reaching down to the blue sea. On the right, were grazing fields leading to long strips of cultivated ground. He might flee down the road, he reasoned to himself, and perhaps get to the ferry-ways. If he reached the latter, he remembered that a boat was there, just one craft, moored to a long birch stake a few feet from the shore.

“Perhaps I can get that boat,” he concluded. If successful, he could push off from the shore and elude his pursuers. But who would win, the so-called “Indian” or his pursuers? How those men in pursuit were urging on their horse, Barnabas rising in his seat and flourishing his whip, thereby holding out a continual and audible threat! The horse though was not the swiftest, but old and stupid. Ahead was the fugitive, one hand gripping the precious bag containing the money,

the other holding a stout, ordinary travelling-bag.

"I'll drop this big, old travelling bag," concluded True. "They will stop to pick it up and so I shall gain time."

Away went this piece of property, and True's trick was successful. The wagon was quickly pulled up, and Barnabas' companion grabbed the prize.

"Barnabas," shouted Mr. Prentiss in disgust, "only his dirty old clothes in it, I declare! The first thing thrown away by a man that is running off, is of the least value. You can always count on that as true. Might have known it! Go it! Go it!"

On rattled the wagon, and True as vigorously stirred up the dust before him. Something else was then thrown aside. This was a sacrifice not altogether regretted. It was True's big, baggy beard for several days telling a lie whose dimensions were much larger than those of the beard. It had been gradually working itself loose, and it so annoyed True as it slipped about that he parted readily with the deception and flung it aside, exclaiming, "There, off with you! Those fools may pick that up if they will!"

"Only a big mess of hair!" said Barnabas.

"It is the lie that Winthrop has been luggin' round. Guess we won't stop for that!"

On galloped the old horse; forward sprang True.

Next, off went True's hat. Finally the hand bag became an obstacle and True argued whether he should drop that. The situation was now very desperate. True could see the ferry-ways and the waiting boat. He could also see a road diverging from the main way.

"Shall I take that side-road?" he queried.

If he had done so, there would have been some interesting results.

"A boat ahead is better then a road going I don't—know—where," concluded True.

He stuck to the long road and stuck to his precious bag.

"Oh dear!" groaned Mr. Prentiss. "What made me get out to pick up that bag of old dirty linen?"

"No used to cry over spilt milk, Mr. Prentiss," replied Barnabas. "Git up thar, git up thar!"

"There's a road, Barnabas! Where's Tim?"

"Dunno! Git up thar!"

"Well," thought Mr. Prentiss, "if that

young man don't fly around, he'll lose his chance to get any money from me for his store."

And where was Tim! He ought to have been at the old ferry by this time, opening his arms to True but hardly in welcome. While driving along the cart-path through the woods, the wagon hit a stump thrusting itself forward into the narrow path, and as the wagon was tender and the stump tough, the wagon and not the stump gave way! The vehicle was badly hurt.

"Let it go!" exclaimed the miller. "We will tie the horse and get it on our way back. Nobody will tech it. We will push ahead on foot."

The two dismounted and began a foot-race for the ferry. The woods were not a lengthy stretch of trees, and the two men soon reached the open fields. Beyond these, hidden by a ridge of land, ran the highway.

"Leave me!" said the panting miller. "You are—younger—and can—run faster."

"Oh," said Tim, "time enough!" He knew the neighborhood, had roughly calculated the probable length of True's stay at the restaurant, the progress also they must make to intercept him, and concluded that there was sufficient

time to jog along as he and the miller were going. "Besides, if True gets beyond our road," reasoned Tim, "Barnabas will pick him up."

"Better drop me and put!" warned the panting, wheezy miller again. "Do—do—do! I'm—jest blown!"

"Time enough!" asserted Tim again. If Tim had gone forward as fast as he was able, he would have reached the "long road" in season to intercept True. As it was, on his arrival at the turn, there was "time enough"—to miss True. He looked ahead and True was near the water! Barnabas was shooting past, hallooing to Tim, "Come on!"

Tim did now "come on" ardently. True was opposite the door of the restaurant where he had dined. This door was open.

"Stop, thief!" shouted Barnabas to the fugitive, hatless and beardless, but still gripping the precious bag.

"I've got ye!" the grinning constable said to himself. "You won't go into that house where the folks will nab ye, and you won't want to take a wettin' in the water. Got ye now, sartin'! Boat's beyond your reach, and you daresn't go in that door!" Barnabas quickly reined in his horse and jumped to the

ground. In the mean time though, True had boldly rushed into the restaurant!

"If he aint gone in there!" cried the constable. "Ketcht now in a trap sure as ye are born! In after him! Hold on though! Somebody must stay out here, one before the house and one back of it. Tim! I say, Tim!"

Tim had now arrived, red and puffing.

"Tim, you may stay out here!" directed Commander Locke. The miller came up breathing heavily.

"Square, you take the back side of the house and peek round the corners too. Now watch! If he cuts out of a window or door, grab him! Don't let him git away! Hun-now! Come inside with me, Mister Prentiss! Hun-now! In with ye!"

"What do ye want?" here inquired a voice coming round a corner of the building.

It was the keeper of the establishment, who came from some point in the rear of the house. "What's goin' on? Injuns, fire, tornader? Nobody to hum there! My wife's away and left me to do the cookin' and tother things."

Commander Locke explained the situation to him, and he became an ally at once and

consented to act as one more watchman outside.

The search was prosecuted with vigor. Barnabas' force hunted everywhere, down cellar, in potato bins and behind the pork barrel, then in the kitchen and the other rooms on the first floor, taking the bedrooms next, under all the beds and in the closets, and finally up in the garret. It was all in vain.

True could not be found.

"The most mysterious thing!" said Barnabas in profound disgust. "He got out somehow. Yes, got away!"

Tim declared, "I'm a-goin' to set up and watch for him. He is in this house, I know."

Tim kept his word. The others left at twilight having no faith in the success of a prolonged hunt. Tim remained to sit alone in a rocking chair in the room where the restaurant keeper served his guests. For awhile, he kept bravely awake. About twelve, he began to nod. "Time enough for a little doze," drowsily muttered Tim, "just one minute, one! I'll get nearer the door!" A quarter after twelve, he was smothered in slumber. It was soon after midnight that from behind an old chimney in the garret, out from among cobwebs and old herbs and accumulations of dirt, lighted by

a match he had scratched, stole a sorry-feeling and sorry-looking pilgrim, cramped, sore, and nigh choked with dust. Softly, he crept down-stairs, his shoes in his hand, halting at the foot of the lowest flight, and directing a hasty glance toward the door of the lighted restaurant before venturing to pass it. There in utter unconsciousness, sat the nodding Tim, his slouching felt hat pulled down over his eyes. In this assistant constable's lap, was slothfully folded a pair of brown hands. True directed only one hasty glance at the sleeper, and leering at him sneeringly and triumphantly, went with a stealthy tread out into the night. He was seen—the next day? Not at all, and never in that part of the country. Somebody in Barkton thought they found in a paper one day a description of a horse-thief shot in another state, and said, "That must have been True Winthrop!" It did turn out that the thief was True Winthrop. "Got away from us only to be snapped up for a wuss fate," was Barnabas' comment.

The next day after the unsuccessful hunt, when Tim, Barnabas, Mr. Prentiss and the miller met, they discussed their unsuccessful attempt.

"Came awful near gittin' that ere chap!" remarked the miller. "If you had only left me, Tim, as I suggested yesterday, and pushed ahead as I advised, you might have nabbed him. You know you thought you had time enough."

"Yes," replied Tim abstractedly, stepping aside to meditate awhile. He was thinking of something else. "Oh dear!" he murmured softly.

Mr. Prentiss was thinking of the same subject, for when the miller whispered to him, "I remember I gave this young man a piece of advice when he was too late for my tide-mill, and I'm afeared he has lost the recollection of it," then Mr. Prentiss made this answer:

"Well, I am very sure he has lost a pile of money he wanted of me to start him in business."

Yes, still too late for the tide-mill, and Tim brought back to Barkton no "grist" for that proposed store.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BEARING FRUIT.

“THREE princesses expected to-night,” said Mrs. Shattuck one Friday about two years after the close of the last chapter, “and, Tim, you want to start early to get them home.”

“All right! I’m to call at Long Brook, Wind Corner, and the factory,” replied Tim.

About half after three, Tim and his wagon appeared at the Long Brook school-house, out of whose door trooped the children, glad to be liberated from their tasks. Their teacher quickly followed them.

“I thought I would dismiss a little early, for it is something of a ride to Wind Corner,” said May Shattuck to Tim as they rode away.

“Well, May, this is your first week at teaching, and how do you like it?”

“Oh, ever so much! Hard sometimes, but it is one of the hard things that pay well for the trouble they make you,” said May.

"Glad you like it. You said you meant to teach and you stuck to it and got yourself ready, and now you have—what shall I call it?"

"Fruit-time after the sowing?" said May with a laugh. "We might call it that."

Princess No. One.

"Whoa, there, Nancy!" shouted Tim at the door of the school-house located at Wind Corner. The door was open and a little girl with staring black eyes was trudging out into the rough path leading to the road.

"Teacher in there?" Tim said to the girl.

"Yeth, thir."

"How do you like her?"

"Loth! Thee ain't big, but then thee ith real thmart."

"No doubt about that. You tell her, please, some folks want to see her, will you?"

"Yeth, thir."

"Here I am!" cried Dot Fairfax, quickly following the little messenger when she appeared again. "All ready to go with you!"

"All ready to have you, Dot!" cried the other school-mistress, making room for Dot on the back wagon-seat.

"Well, Dot," said Tim as they rode off, "I will ask you as I did May; how do you like

school-keeping? You have tried it a week and ought to know."

"I like it. It is not all a sitting in your chair and letting the world wait on you, but I take a solid satisfaction in it, and don't regret at all the time I gave to preparation for my work."

Princess No. Two.

"Now for the canning factory!" shouted Tim, and once more the wagon-wheels began to turn swiftly round. At the door of the factory, Will Fairfax made his appearance.

"Halloo, there!" he shouted. "Welcome, school-marms! Come, step out, please! Want to introduce you to our new book-keeper."

"What?" asked Dot.

"Well, little gal, it means that I am going away, but you will be pleased to know where. Some of mother's old friends, the Redburns—"

"The Redburns? Oh, they are splendid people."

"In the iron business, you know. Well, they wanted a man near them in their counting-room, and thinking I might like the position—good salary you know—have offered it to me. I said 'yes,' and now, here is the new book-keeper that takes my place here."

As he spoke, he led them into the counting-

room, where at a desk, her face flushed with the joy of success, sat Arvie Estey, the new book-keeper.

"I thought," said the superintendent approaching from his corner, "if Will was going to leave us—and I can't blame him for wanting to improve his chances in life—if he was going to leave, as I said, it seemed to me Arvie, who has been attending school and making the best use of her time, would be the one to succeed Will."

Princess No. Three.

"Oh," thought Tim, as the three girls rode home with him, "wish I could have had that chance in the counting-room!"

It had gone though to the person who, improving her opportunities, had fitted herself for the position. Another instance of fruit-bearing.

In after days, Tim remained—Tim. He did not part with his very serious fault of procrastination. Neglecting to prepare himself for more important work, he simply stood at a bench in the old canning factory, and drudged there. He was no more intelligent, for he did not arouse himself to systematic self-culture. In spiritual things, alas, he was still undecided and careless. "I am going to change my life,

I am going to lead a Christian life sometime," he would say, and never did. What a serious mistake! So the time slipt by. He was careless time-enough Tim, still saying, "Tomorrow will do."

When his old teacher, Mr. Eastburn, held that long anticipated meeting of his former pupils, all in that part of the country came to it. All? There was an exception. Tim Shattuck intended to be present. He prepared to go, but to his energetic mother who was hastening him forward in the work of preparation he said, "Time enough!" He arrived at the place of meeting when—the meeting was over! Still, too late for the tide-mill!

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